

Harry's Hand Cannon

"What're ya doing boy?" Vernon asked with a hint of honest curiosity.

"There are some people I need to kill," Harry's eyes flashed dangerously. "I'm studying to kill them."

"What sort of people?" Vernon blinked, "normal people or your sort?"

"My sort," Harry snorted.

"Wait right here," Vernon rushed off and returned a few minutes later with a small wooden box. "Here boy, take this."

"What is it?" Harry asked opening the box cautiously.

"It's the pistol your grand father carried in the War," Vernon replied quietly. "And around the world before that."

"Why do you have it?" Harry regarded the fat man with no small amount of curiosity.

"Your grandfather gave it to me to give to my son when I married you Aunt," Vernon smiled at the memory.

"What," Harry looked down at the big revolver. "Then why are you giving this to me?"

"Your grandfather was an officer in the Army," Vernon ignored the question. "And did some important work with the Special Air Services after the war, he finally retired in the nineteen fifty's as a Major. He kept his old pistol and gave it to Petunia when he passed away, I was going to give it to Dudley but . . . but I think you'd be able to put it to better use."

"Thank you," Harry was astounded. Never before had any of his 'family' given him anything of substance, "but . . . but why?"

"Petunia would have thrown a fit if she knew we still had that and an even bigger fit if I gave it to Dudley." Vernon shrugged, "and like I said, I think you'd be able to put it to good use."

"I . . . thank you"

"Don't thank me until I tell you the rest," Vernon frowned. "I hate freaks, I can't abide the idea of waving a wand to get around doing a bit of honest work. You say you're going to kill some freaks then you have my blessing . . . just don't let any live that you could have killed, kill them all if you can."

"What?" Harry's eyes widened.

"I'm not expecting you to kill your friends," Vernon gave a cruel smirk. "Just the ones you set out for in the first place, don't show any mercy, don't let a single one survive that you could have killed. If it makes you feel any better, tell yourself that it insures that they can never hurt another person again."

"I . . . "

"Think about it boy," Vernon started walking out of the room. "And take the day off to do it, the yard can wait and I want you do consider what I said very carefully."

Harry spent the day mulling over his uncle's words, on the one hand he was reluctant to become a cold blooded killer, and on the other . . . on the other, he was sure that he wasn't going to win by using tickling charms.

Decision made, Harry opened his door and walked down to meet his uncle.

"Uncle Vernon," Harry called out to get the man's attention.

"It'd better be good boy," the fat man tore his gaze from the television.

"I'll do it," Harry nodded. "But I'll need you to allow a few things."

"Like what?" The fat man's piggy eyes narrowed.

"I'm going to need to order a few books," Harry began. "And I might need to brew a potion or two."

"And this'll help you kill more freaks?" The fat man asked eagerly.

"Yes," Harry nodded. "It will allow me to kill many more than I would have been able to otherwise."

"Then you have my permission," Vernon nodded. "You're also excused from yard work, I want you to spend as much time as you need to on this."

"Than you," Harry turned away and started walking up the stairs.

"Might also be a good idea to start working with Dudley," Vernon called out. "Learning a bit of boxing might be just the edge you'll need to kill one more before they manage to bring you down."

"Thank you uncle," Harry gave a cold smile. "I look forward to learning all I can."

Harry returned to his room and spent the next several minutes writing a letter to Flourish and Blotts, taking care not to mention anything that might not be appropriate for a young boy to ask. He had suspicions that Dumbledore might be monitoring his mail and even if he wasn't why take the chance of giving information to an unknown.

To whom it may concern,

I have recently seen mention of an odd muggle device called a gon or perhaps gun. I was hoping that you would be willing to sell me any books you might have that talk about this subject. I would be particularly interested in any books that deal with past enchantments of this odd device though I doubt that it's important enough that any wizard would bother wasting the time on one.

Sincerely,

Harry James Potter.

Harry looked down at the note with a sense of satisfaction, with luck they wouldn't even know what he was talking about.

"I got a letter for you girl," Harry opened the cage and spent several moments stroking his pet. "Would you be willing to deliver it for me?"

"Hoot," Hedwig bobbed her head and offered her leg.

"It's to Flourish and Blotts in Diagon Alley," Harry tied on the letter. "Have a good flight."

Hedwig returned about an hour later with a strange package clutched in her talons.

"Thanks girl," Harry took the package. "I was starting to get worried about you."

Hedwig gave him a flat stare.

"Two hours may be fast for a normal owl," Harry smiled. "But you're an exceedingly clever owl and I didn't think that you'd be slowed down by a package."

Hedwig seemed to consider his words for a moment, then bobbing her head she returned to her perch and went to sleep.

Harry tore open the envelope that came attached to the package and began to read.

Dear Mr. Potter,

You were correct when you supposed that the gon was too obscure to write about. I have forwarded the only book in stock that I was able to find on gons and I beg you take it without worrying about the charge. The book looks as if it has sat in my inventory for many years and upon further investigation I was able to learn that it was written by a squib and as such must not be of any value or importance.

The rest of the letter continued on in that vein and Harry tossed it aside, he had finally found a way to protect himself without getting expelled and he wasn't going to waste a moment.

Modern Arms

by Sergeant Major Nigel Smythe British Army ret.

Harry opened the cover and was immediately stunned by his good fortune. The first chapter was entitled 'Simple Potions for Maintenance.' A cursory glance revealed that most of the potions could be brewed by a first year with very few magical ingredients.

Over the next week, Harry brewed several potions. The first was a simple cleaning potion that removed caked oil and dirt. The second was a potion that strengthened the frame. The third potion restored Harry's ammunition to a like new condition. And the fourth insured that he would never lose his new weapon against the dark.

Harry carefully propped up his book and checked to make sure that his pistol was unloaded as the book had suggested he do every time he picked it up. Copying the firing stance illustrated in the book, Harry spent several minutes cocking and firing his revolver at imaginary targets.

"I have a surprise for you the next time we meet Tom," Harry smiled. "A very big surprise."

"Open up boy," Vernon pounded on the door. "Looks like some freaks are bothering the people in the house across the street."

"What are they dressed in?" Harry broke open his pistol and began feeding the fat cartridges into it.

"Black with white masks," Vernon glanced at his suddenly dangerous nephew.

"Just making sure," Harry closed the action and put a handful of the precious cartridges in his pocket. "I might be late for dinner."

"I'll be sure to save something for you," Vernon gave a sadistic smile. "Give 'em hell boy."

"Stay inside," Harry shoved the pistol in his belt and headed for the front door. "I think you'll be safe here."

Harry crept out the front door and immediately became aware of half an Order guard's whispered call for help.

Ignoring the man, Harry fixed his eyes on the group terrorising the people across the street and nearly fainted in relief. For one thing, there couldn't be more than four of them. For another, there didn't appear to be any inner circle members. It looked like a group of new recruits had come to his neighborhood by chance, Harry was going to make sure they didn't survive such a fatal mistake.

Pulling the heavy pistol out of his belt, Harry concealed it behind his leg and approached the group at a fast walk.

"What do we have here?" One of the death eaters noticed as Harry came within a few feet. "Another vic . . ."

Harry raised the revolver and put a bullet into the man's throat, silencing him forever. Two of the other death eaters stared down at their bleeding comrade with identical looks of shock, this wasn't the way things were supposed to happen, people weren't supposed to fight back, no one was supposed to get hurt . . . well, no one of importance.

The third death eater whipped his wand out and shot two quick curses, Harry retaliated by showing once again that accuracy was more important than speed in a gunfight by putting his next bullet in the man's chest.

"Oh g . . ." Harry's third bullet shattered the man's jaw and his fourth entered right below the left eye.

The last death eater raised his wand with a trembling hand and died as Harry's fifth and final bullet entered the man's chest and shredded his heart.

From start to finish, the fight had been over in less than six seconds.

"Bloody hell," Harry spun to engage the man behind him. "IT'S ME, I'M ORDER I'M ORDER."

Harry shoved the pistol back into his belt and clenched his hands to stop their shaking.

"Is help going to come soon?" Harry asked after he managed to suppress his stomach's desire to empty itself.

"Y . . . yes," the man removed his invisibility cloak and stared down at the death eaters in shock. "What did you do to them?"

"The same thing they would have done to me," Harry replied evenly. "Only I didn't prolong it as much as they would have."

"Bloody hell," the man repeated himself. "I don't . . ."

"Are you alright Harry?" Dumbledore called out, the Order had arrived.

"I'm fine," Harry nodded.

"What happened to the death eaters?" The Headmaster stared down in shock.

"I killed them," Harry answered bluntly. "I don't think they were here for me though."

"How could you do something like this Harry?" Dumbledore removed one of the masks, "they're just children, not much older than you are. Why couldn't you have taken them alive?"

"Why should I take them alive?" Harry looked down at the bodies without a hint of remorse, "they would've done the same to me."

"If we had taken them alive they might have changed," Dumbledore explained. "Even if they had gotten away, we still might have been able to bring them back into the light."

"I don't care about them," Harry's temper was beginning to fray. "I'd rather think about other people."

"What other people?" The Headmaster challenged.

"The ones I've saved," Harry snarled. "Like it or not, those are four death eaters that will never hurt another person."

"You can't just go around killing people," the Headmaster tried his kindly grandfather voice. "There are more civilized ways of dealing with things."

"Like what?" Harry challenged, "waiting until they realize the error of their ways? Hoping that the great Phoenix will come and make everything better?"

A ragged cheer from one of the watchers clued Harry to the large crowd that had come to watch the confrontation, including the Minister and several reporters.

"Harry," the Headmaster began gently. "You need to control your anger, I remember another angry young wizard that came to Hogwarts a few years ago . . . I don't want you to end up like he did."

"We're through." Harry wasn't going to take it anymore. "There is no more you and me old man, we are done with each other."

"We're not finished with this conversation Harry," the Headmaster kept his normal look of serenity.

"May I have everyone's attention," Harry called out ignoring the headmaster. "I'm ready to give my statement."

Reporters and ministry officials flocked to hear his word. Reporters clutched their quills and Fudge stood proudly at his shoulder.

"I killed several people today," Harry began. "But since they were all death eaters, well . . . let's just say that I'm not going to lose any sleep over it. I've been fighting Voldemort since I entered the

wizarding world and so far as I'm concerned this is just the latest in a long series of skirmishes."

"Mr. Potter," one of the reporters waved his hands to get attention. "What are your plans now?"

"My plans," Harry smiled. "Are to leave the wizarding world, the last year has shown me what you truly think of me . . . an attention seeking boy is what your paper called me isn't it? From now on the wizarding world can rot for all I care, so long as Voldemort leaves me alone then I have no reason to take an active role in his defeat . . . if you want my help, then you'll have to pay me quite a bit for it."

"You can't be serious," one of the reporters managed to do more than stare in shock. "You can't abandon us like that."

"Why not?" Harry shrugged, "you all abandoned me. So long as Voldemort leaves me alone then I will leave him alone, I would like to add that it would also be in his best interests to leave the muggle world alone."

"Why should he leave the muggles alone?" The reporter clung to his professionalism.

"Because there are more of them and they are better at killing," Harry laughed. "I suggest you look up the Manhattan Project if you doubt me."

"What is the Manhattan Project?"

"Do your job," Harry smiled. "I'm not going to do it for you."

"One last question Mr. Potter," the reporter swallowed. "Why do you think we should pay you to help us?"

"I'd be just as happy if you didn't and left me alone. But to answer your question, why in the hell should I risk my life for you for nothing? I've done it in the past and I would have been happy to be repaid with nothing, instead I received slander. I'm tired of it, Aurors risk their lives and they are well compensated. Is it so much to ask that I be

given the same consideration?" Harry took a deep breath and looked around at the gathered faces. "So in summation, kill all the wizards you want, leaving the muggle world alone would be the intelligent thing to do, and if you lot of morons want my help . . . pay me."

Harry shook his head and began to walk away, he had things to pack.

"You can't do this Harry," the Headmaster grabbed him on the shoulder. "I can't let you condemn innocent people to death by your inaction."

"I learned from your example," Harry sneered. "How many people did the Order save this summer?"

"I . . ."

"None," Harry shook off the hand and began walking again.

"You can't do this to people," the Headmaster couldn't believe the way things were going.

"You think so?" Harry drew his wand.

"I know so Harry," the Headmaster allowed himself to relax.

"Watch me," Harry snapped his wand and threw the pieces on the ground.

"What have you done?" Dumbledore looked down at the remains in horror.

Ignoring the Headmaster, Harry entered the house. That fake wand was the best galleon he'd ever spent.

"What do you think you're doing?" Vernon purpled, "you're leaving the fight? You're going to let them live?"

"Didn't you listen uncle?" Harry smiled, "I told them that I'd only fight for pay."

"So you're going to get the freaks to pay you to kill more freaks?" Vernon gave a slow nod, "I think I might be proud of you . . . Harry."

"Thank you uncle," Harry nodded. "I'll be going, you might be safe here but . . ."

"But it might be a good idea to take that overseas transfer," Vernon nodded. "Goodbye boy, I doubt we'll ever see each other again."

"I'll try to remember to send newspaper clippings every time I kill some more of them," Harry smiled. "I'm afraid that they'll be my sort of newspaper though."

"Appreciate it boy," Vernon nodded. "And I'll be happy to read them, even if they are . . . your sort of paper."

Harry nodded and began walking up the stairs, he had things to pack.

The first thing that Harry did upon returning to his room was to clean and reload his revolver, the book had stressed the need to immediately clean after firing and Harry did not know enough to take the chance of delaying for a few hours. Harry made sure to take his time and get everything in the room that belonged to him and after a moment of thought he included the books that his cousin never read, waste not want not.

Dragging his heavy trunk behind, Harry walked out into the street and watched for a few seconds as the Minister of Magic was mobbed by reporters, all demanding to know what he had done to drive the savior of the wizarding world away. Turning his head, he watched for a few more seconds as the Order gathered around the Headmaster like a group of sheep seeking comfort from the storm.

Shaking his head, Harry began dragging his heavy trunk up the street, he wasn't going to stay here a moment longer than he had to.

"Hello Harry," Rita had noticed the young hero's return and she had no intention of passing up the chance to get a better story. "Care to answer a few questions for me?"

"Which newspaper?" Harry didn't bother to look at the woman, he was past the point of caring about niceties.

"I'm still at the Quibbler," Rita answered quickly.

"On a few conditions," Harry nodded. "You only send this to the Quibbler, if they want more then they go through the Lovegoods. You report what I say accurately, one embellishment and I'll never give you so much as the time of day after this. And finally, you cast a featherlight charm on my trunk."

"A featherlight charm?"

"It's heavy and I don't like having to move it," Harry replied quickly. "Well?"

"Yes," Rita nodded. "Of course, I'll agree to your conditions."

"Good," Harry smiled. "You have until I decide to summon the Knight Bus . . . I'll need to ask you to use your wand for that."

"Why?"

"I'm sure a reporter as skilled as yourself will manage to figure it out," Harry smirked. "First question."

"Could we get around this corner first?" Rita looked back nervously, "I'd rather not have to share you with the other reporters."

"As you like," Harry nodded. "About that featherlight charm . . ."

"Of course," Rita quickly cast the charm. "May I ask what your plans are now?"

"Now?" Harry paused for a moment, "I'm going to find a place to live and have a quiet life."

"You mentioned that you'd be willing to fight for pay?" Rita had a parchment out and was frantically writing, "how much?"

"That all depends on the Minister," Harry smiled. "I won't even be able to do it unless he gives the ok and grants me a few things."

"Like what?" Rita's eyes gleamed, she loved making people's lives difficult and she was sure that Harry's answer would make the Minister's life very difficult.

"Well," Harry smiled. "Off the top of my head . . . immunity from the underage restrictions for me and anyone that I chose, immunity from prosecution for myself and anyone I chose, and access to the Ministry's archives and resources."

"Why did you add immunity from prosecution?" Rita looked up from her notes.

"The Minister tried to punish me for self defence last year," Harry waved his hand in the direction of the park. "I protected myself and my cousin from several dementers, and I was charged and tried for it. I don't trust the Ministry and I've lost faith in everyone else . . . summon the Knight Bus please."

"Right away," Rita held up her wand and the Knight Bus appeared with a bang. "One last question, what's your response to the people who say that you're abandoning the wizarding world in it's hour of need."

Harry paused, halfway up the steps. "They abandoned me first."

AN: My version of the 'Harry gets guns' story line. If you didn't notice, Harry did not snap his wand. He snapped a fake wand. I'm not sure how fast I'll get parts of this out, I don't have as large an outline as I usually start out with and I have a few other projects, I'll try to have something out soon.

The Regiment

"Where to?" Stan eyed Harry as he stepped onto the bus.

"The Leaky Cauldron," Harry yawned as he handed over a few coins. "Wake me when we get there."

Harry walked to the back of the bus and made himself comfortable, tomorrow promised to be a very interesting day.

"We're here sir," Stan called out to wake his frightening passenger.

"Thank you," Harry stood up and walked out of the bus without a backward glance.

Every conversation ceased as Harry walked into the bar, and every eye turned to look at the famous scar on his forehead.

"Hello Tom," Harry ignored the watchers. "How are you tonight."

"Fine," the innkeeper smiled. "You want your usual room?"

"Please," Harry nodded. "And could you send up some food? I didn't get a chance to eat today."

"Right away," Tom nodded. "It'll be up as soon as I can get it made, what would you like?"

"Give me whatever you recommend," Harry smiled. "I know you wouldn't give me anything but the best."

"Yes sir," Tom straightened up. "Here's your key sir."

"Thank you Tom," Harry took the key with a smile. "You're one of the best."

Harry walked up the stairs to his room and pulled out a piece of parchment, he had no doubt that the Minister would fall over himself and give anything he asked for. He also knew that he was going to

need to know a lot more if he was going to successfully bring his half thought out plans to life.

Mr. Smythe

I have recently read your book and I was hoping that you could recommend more books on using magic with firearms.

Signed

Harry James Potter

Harry looked at the letter, with luck the man would reply with a list of books or a place that he could get a bit of training.

Harry gave the letter to his owl and then sat down to reread one of the chapters, he had a feeling that he'd need to the information soon and he wanted to be as familiar with it as possible.

"Mr. Potter," Tom knocked on the door. "I have your dinner ready."

"Thank you Tom," Harry opened the door. "Come in."

"I made you quite a bit of food," Tom lifted the lid to reveal the dinner. "I hope you don't mind but you always look so thin and well . . ."

"It's alright Tom," Harry smiled. "I appreciate it, I'll try to eat as much as I can."

"Can I ask you a question?" Tom smiled nervously, "a man came in earlier and said you planned to leave the wizarding world."

"I'm considering it," Harry nodded. "After the last year . . . well, I'm just tired of all the slander and responsibility's."

"You'd really leave us to 'You-Know-Who?'" Tom asked nervously.

"I told the press that I'll no longer be so proactive unless I get paid," Harry held up his hand. "Preferably by the Ministry and they'll also

have to grant me a few concessions, if I'm going to fight in this war then I'm going to do it my way."

"You're only interested in money?"

"No," Harry shook his head. "I don't particularly care about money, but I can't fight alone. I'll need money for resources and to pay my bills. It's only fair isn't it? Aurors and Hit-Wizards don't do their jobs for free, and normal people aren't expected to go out looking for trouble."

"I suppose that's reasonable," Tom nodded slowly.

"All I was trying to do is tell Fudge that if he wants my help then he is going to have to let me do things my way," Harry smiled. "I just did it in the only way I thought a politician would understand."

"So you're not leaving us?" Tom wanted to make one thing sure.

"Not unless Fudge makes me," Harry smiled. "You're good people, and I will protect you if the Minister lets me."

"Thank you," Tom sagged in relief. "If you'll excuse me, I gotta go downstairs and straighten a few people out."

"Goodbye Tom," Harry smiled. "I enjoyed our talk."

Tom closed the door behind him and Harry started eating. Halfway through his meal, he was interrupted by the return of his owl.

"Hello girl," Harry smiled. "How are you."

Hedwig held out her leg to present the letter she carried.

"What's this?" Harry took the letter and gave his owl a treat.

Mr. Potter

I am currently in a the Regimental Association building, this is a private club located two blocks away from the Leaky Cauldron. I am

available for a meeting now or at any time after five most nights, I await your reply or your presence.

Signed

Sergeant Major Smythe British Army ret.

Harry looked at the letter in shock, never in his wildest dreams did he imagine a reply like this. Throwing on his coat and shoving his pistol in his belt, Harry ran down the steps to the bar.

"Aurors get paid for this and have Ministry support," Tom was in the middle of a conversation when Harry walked into the main room.

"I'll be out for a bit Tom," Harry called out over his shoulder. "I've got an important meeting I need to go to."

"I'll put a heating charm on your dinner," Tom called out after him as he rushed through the front door.

"Excuse me sir," Harry stopped the first man he saw. "You wouldn't happen to know where the Regimental Association building is, would you?"

"Down the street and on the left," the man pointed. "It's easy to miss, so keep your eyes open."

"Thank you," Harry ran down the street and nearly missed the building. Gasping for breath, Harry walked up to the plain door and lifted the knocker.

"Yes?" The door cracked and a pair of eyes stared out suspiciously. "What do you want?"

"I have a meeting with Sergeant Major Smythe," Harry fought to keep his face impassive. "And I'd rather not keep him waiting."

"Come in," the old man opened the door.

"Thank you," Harry's breathing returned to normal.

"Come with me," the old man motioned for him to follow. "Sergeant Major Smythe is in the smoking room."

The old man led Harry over several thick red carpets and down a hall with ornate mahogany paneling and finally ended in front of a nondescript door with a brass plate that labeled it the smoking room.

"Sergeant Major Smythe," the old man opened the door and called out. "I have a visitor for you."

"Send him in," a deep voice called back. "And send up a bottle of Laphroaig."

"Right away Sergeant Major," the man nodded.

"Come in Mr. Potter," Sergeant Major Smythe waved Harry over. "And have a seat."

"Thank you," Harry took a seat. "I have to admit that I'm a bit surprised at how fast you replied."

"And I'm a bit surprised you came at all," the Sergeant Major laughed. "Why did you want to know more about small arms?"

"Because I killed four death eaters today," Harry replied bluntly. "And I don't think I could have done it so easily without my grandfather's pistol."

"You want to know more about firearms so you can kill more of them?"

"I want to know more about firearms so I can kill them all," Harry leaned back. "I've been in this war since I was a year old, I have no desire to be in this war for any longer than I have to."

"I see," Sergeant Major Smythe nodded. "You plan to do all this by yourself?"

"If I have to," Harry nodded. "I had some friends help me a few weeks ago, I think they'd be willing to help me again."

"Children?"

"They're all I have," Harry frowned. "Most of the adults aren't willing to help, and I can't trust most of the adults that are willing to help."

"Why not?" Sergeant Major Smythe held up his hand, "I'm not arguing with you I'm asking for information."

"They work for one of two people," Harry held up two fingers. "Albus Dumbledore or Minister Fudge, I wouldn't trust Fudge to pick his own nose. Asking for his help is worse than asking for none at all."

"Your Whiskey sir," the old man from before put a bottle and a couple glasses on the table then took his leave.

"And Dumbledore?" The Sergeant Major asked quietly.

"Is so blinded by the so called 'greater good' that he doesn't care much about the little people," Harry snorted. "Unless of course they're death eaters trying to 'redeem' themselves."

"Taking a bunch of untrained school children into the fight is the same as asking for them to be killed," Smythe smiled. "Hard experience has taught me that much."

"I don't have anyone else," Harry shook his head. "I wish I did, but there's no one else that can help."

"Look around you," the old man waved his hand. "Do you know where you are?"

"In a private club," Harry nodded. "Why?"

"In a private club for Squibs," Smythe corrected. "Squibs that left their family to serve the Empire, Squibs that spent years in the Military."

"Why so many?" Harry started to smile.

"It used to be the custom to send any sons without magic into the Army to get rid of them," Smythe smiled. "It was a way to get rid of unwanted sons for many people, the wizarding world just took advantage of it."

"Do they still do it?"

"No," the old man shook his head. "The Army and the Empire have both shrunk, and the death eaters made it a priority to eliminate any squib that they could find . . . the Squib's blood was tainted don't you know."

"No offence," Harry smiled. "But do you really think a bunch of old men can make that much of a difference?"

"Your war with Voldemort," the old NCO smiled. "Is nothing to us, at best it's a minor insurgency. We know how to fight and we know how to kill."

"And you know about the wizarding world," Harry smiled. "I told them that I wouldn't fight unless they gave me pay, and a few concisions. Would everyone really be willing to fight with me?"

"Willing to fight and follow orders," Smythe nodded.

"Why would they follow my orders?" Harry blinked, "I'm just a kid."

"They're use to their officers being half trained children," Smythe smiled. "Just leave everything to me."

"They'll really join us?" Harry still couldn't believe it, "when they could stay here and enjoy their retirement?"

"I'm almost one hundred years old," the old man smiled coldly. "I retired from the army in the late nineteen fifty's and I was lucky to stay that long, I have two grandchildren and one great granddaughter in your school. You come here and you offer me a chance to go back to the Army, you sweeten the deal by offering me a shot at the men who want to hurt my cute little great granddaughter, and you expect

me to turn you down? I'd pay you for a chance to do either one, and every man here would do the same."

"Can you tell me how to get a bit of training?" Harry gave a weak smile, "I did write to you in hopes of learning to use my pistol better."

"What kind of Pistol do you have?" The old soldier leaned forward.

"I don't know," Harry admitted. "I could show it to you if you like."

"I'd like," Smythe nodded.

"One moment," Harry pulled out the large pistol and broke it open to unload it. "Your book said to always unload a firearm before handing it to someone." Harry explained as he set the revolver on the table.

"Glad you paid attention," Sergeant Major Smythe nodded. "It's a Webley Mk VI, fires .455 caliber bullet, you say this was your grandfather's?"

"Yes," Harry nodded. "That's what my uncle said, he said that my grandfather was in the Army during and after the war and that he worked for something called the Special Air Service after the war."

"Sport and Social," the old man suppressed a laugh. "Do you know what his rank and name was?"

"My uncle said he was a Major," Harry licked his lips. "And he would have been named Evans, that was my mothers name."

"Evans?" The old soldier nodded, "I might have known an officer by that name. It'll help you to have had him in your family."

"Why?" Harry was a bit confused.

"Blood will tell," Smythe smirked. "Some of the men will feel better knowing that you had officers in the family, they're old and they still have the idea that the young gentleman is special."

"Oh . . . is there anything I can do to prepare?" Harry was not going to let these men down, "I'm sure the Minister will cave to my demands and I don't think it will take him much time to do it."

"First thing's first," Sargent Major Smythe stood up. "O'Henry, Jones, McLain., get over here."

"What do you need Smythe?" A man with a scar going across the bridge of his nose gave Harry a curious glance.

"What would you give me to get back into the Army?" Smythe grinned.

"Well," one of the men began. "I already gave my left hand so what do you want?"

"I'm going to give all of you a chance to reenlist," Smythe smiled. "We're forming a regiment and our young gentleman here was kind enough to offer me the post of Regimental Sergeant Major"

"We're in," the third man replied quickly. "Anything is better than spending the rest of my life rotting away here, give me a purpose again and I promise that you won't be disappointed."

"I called you over here because you all retired as senior Non Commissioned Officers, and everyone knows that good Sergeants make a good unit." Smythe smiled, "Mr. Potter has agreed to give me free hand with the enlisted men and I've decided that I want the three of you to help me get things started."

"Do we come in with our old ranks?" One of the old men asked seriously.

"That's all yet to be decided," Smythe took a sip. "Mr. Potter is still in talks with the government, but I expect that he'll be able to tell us more soon. I just wanted to give you an idea of what's happening ahead of time so you could prepare for it."

"Thank you Mr. Potter," one of the old men had tears in his eyes. "You won't regret giving us this opportunity."

"I know," Harry smiled. "You're the best the Empire produced, I'm just lucky for the chance to command you."

"To the Regiment," Smythe held up his glass.

"The Regiment," the others held up their glasses.

"You men spread the word," Smythe commanded. "I want everyone to be ready for when Mr. Potter decides to give the green light."

"So tell me Mr. Potter," Sergeant Major Smythe waited until the other men left. "What are your plans?"

"Now?" Harry exhaled. "I don't know, everything seemed so clear and now it's all moving so fast."

"Get a plan sir," Smythe looked Harry in the eye. "That's your job, you plan things and inspire the men. I take orders and make things happen."

"Ok," Harry's eyes lost focus. "There are military people that march in parades right?"

"Yes there are," Smythe agreed.

"Why don't we be those?" Harry smiled, "it would make it easier for us to carry guns wouldn't it?"

"No . . . but you might be on to something sir," Smythe nodded. "It might give us legitimacy, they might let us back into the Army if we tell them we want that we were a ceremonial unit."

"Good," Harry nodded. "I was also thinking that if we were to get some nice uniforms, we might be able to put men around some of the places that have a high risk of attack. With nice uniforms they'd just be decorations, no one would notice them right?"

"Oh they'd notice them," Smythe nodded. "They don't become invisible for quite a while, but I think the idea has merit. Any other ideas."

"Your book mentioned that a well trained rifleman could hit a target at eight hundred yards?" Harry licked his lips, "could we . . . could we put men on the rooftops? That way if there's an attack they'd be out of sight and could shoot down at the death eaters."

"So you want us to fight a defensive war then?" Smythe nodded.

"At first," Harry admitted. "I think it might be a while before we start fighting back."

"I agree," Smythe nodded. "I think . . ."

A regal looking owl interrupted the man by landing on the table.

". . . that you have a message," Smythe finished with a smile.

"Hmmm," Harry read the message. "Minister Fudge wants to speak with me, he wants to know what he can do to get me to return to the wizarding world."

"When does he want to meet?" Smythe grinned, he was going to enjoy working with this boy.

"Right away," Harry read the last lines of the letter. "He wants to hold a public meeting at the Leaky Cauldron."

"Tell him that you'll be there in fifteen minutes," Smythe advised. "With your permission I'd like to come with you, might be a good idea to have one of the lads come too."

"Do it," Harry nodded. "Any idea how I should handle this?"

"With your permission sir," Smythe smiled. "We'll give them a show, you walk in and me and . . . say McLain will trail behind you. You sit through the meeting and look annoyed and we'll make any suggestions that need to be made."

"That sounds fine," Harry nodded. "Thank you."

"Yes sir," Smythe stood up. "McLain, get over here."

"You called?"

"We're going to go to a meeting with Mr. Potter," Smythe smiled. "Shouldn't be too difficult, Mr. Potter has these bums over a barrel and with luck they won't be too difficult."

"So why are we coming?"

"I've found that its much easier to negotiate with two evil looking thugs standing behind me . . . well, provided they're my thugs of course." Smythe grinned, "Mr. Potter tells me that the current Minister is a worm."

"Spineless," McLain nodded. "I'm in, sounds like fun."
AN: Now you know why it has that title.

The 95th

"Hello Harry," the Minister stood and all eyes turned to watch the-boy-who-lived. "I'm here to see if we can't put aside the misunderstanding we had earlier and to see what we can do to get you to return to the wizarding world."

"Thank you Minister," Harry ignored the man's outstretched hand and sat without waiting for the invitation. "Though I do wonder how you're going to do that."

"Well," Fudge fought hard to keep his smile and sat down. "You mentioned that you'd like to be exempt from the underage restrictions on magic?"

"Among other things," Harry nodded.

"Well you have it," Fudge smiled like he had just handed over the crown jewels. "I'm afraid I can't give you any money though . . ."

"Why Not?" A voice called out from the crowd, "Aurors get paid and they haven't done half the things Harry Has."

Fudge looked around nervously at the crowd muttered their approval of the statement.

"What I meant is that I can't just pay for you to come back," Fudge's fake smile widened. "I would be happy to pay you to fight you-know-who."

"How much?" Smythe glared down at the Minister, "young Mr. Potter has already risked his life for you several times and he's going to need funding if you want him to be able to do it again."

"I think you'll find this more than generous," Fudge wrote a number on a piece of parchment and pushed it across the table.

"I think you'll find this one more realistic," Smythe added a few zeros and passed it back.

"That's outrageous," Fudge blustered.

"You're right," Smythe nodded. "I can't believe that he's willing to risk his life for so little either but I don't think we can put a price on the safety of the wizarding world."

Mutters of agreement reached the Minister's ears and he smiled wildly, "why don't we give you a bit more then your asking for and then why don't you tell us a few of your plans Harry."

"Thank you Minister," Harry smiled. "I'm planning to gather together a small group to defend the wizarding world and I'd like to set up a small school to train people in defensive tactics to help them protect their families."

"That's all?" Fudge blinked.

"To start with," Harry nodded. "I hope to be able to do more over time but as you said . . . our funding is rather low."

"Well then I insist on giving you more," Fudge added another zero and held the amount up for the public to see. "The safety of these people is worth more to me than mere gold."

"Would you mind writing out the Letter of Marquis now Minister?" Smythe smiled widely, "so that the press can get a good look at it?"

"What?" Fudge looked up in shock.

"You don't expect Harry to go after death eaters without some form of legal protection?" Smythe looked around, "after all it's necessary for Aurors to be authorised to do things that regular people are not in order for them to do their jobs."

"Yes well," Fudge looked around nervously.

"And McLain here was kind enough to draw up the paperwork," Smythe handed over a long roll of parchment. "Just sign at the bottom and a copy will be sent to you and to the press."

"Of course," this was not going the way Fudge had expected it to. "How silly of me to forget."

"It happens to the best of us," Harry nodded. "There's just one more thing I'd like from you."

"Yes?" Fudge was resigned to his fate.

"I would just like a letter of introduction to the director of what ever office coordinates things with us in the Muggle government," Harry smiled. "One that mentions that I have your full confidence and support in my project."

"Of course," Fudge couldn't understand why Harry was finishing with such a minor request. "May I ask why?"

"It's something to do with muggles," Harry waved his hand in a dismissive gesture. "I'm sure that it's nothing worth wasting any more of the Minister's time."

"Of course," Fudge wrote out a quick letter and handed it over. "It was just idle curiosity on my part, good luck and good hunting."

"Thank you Minister," Harry smiled. "I'm sure you must be busy so I won't take up any more of your time."

"Good bye Harry," the Minister stood and this time Harry took his outstretched hand. "I'm glad that we were able to resolve our little misunderstanding."

"So am I Minister," Harry couldn't believe things had gone so smoothly.

"That went well," Harry muttered as he watched the Minister leave. "I wonder why."

"Did you perhaps tell someone your side of the story before you went," Smythe glanced around the room "You got a lot more support than he expected you would, he also thought you were bluffing until he saw your reaction to his first offer."

"Do you think we have time to meet with the government?" Harry smiled and waved to the crowd.

"Not tonight," Smythe shook his head. "Give me that letter and I'll have the boys arrange things for tomorrow."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "Do you need me for anything else?"

"No sir," Smythe shook his head. "Not tonight."

"Then I'm going to finish my meal and get some rest," Harry yawned. "See you tomorrow."

"Good night," Smythe nodded for the other two men to join him. "It was a pleasure talking to you today."

"Pleasure was all mine," Harry smiled. For the first time since hearing the prophecy, he was starting to feel good about the way things were starting to happen.

IIIIIIII

Harry awoke to a gentle knock on the door.

"Yes?" Harry grabbed his glasses and forced himself out of bed.

"It's Tom," the old innkeeper replied. "You have some men here to see you."

"Who is it?" Harry replied as he pulled his pants on.

"It's the men you came in with last night," Tom replied. "Should I tell them you're not here."

"No," Harry called out. "Tell them that I'll be down in just a moment."

"Alright," Tom called back. "I will."

Harry walked downstairs a few minutes later and waved to the old soldiers.

"Hello Mr. Potter," McLain smiled. "Would you like breakfast before we leave?"

"Has everyone else eaten?" Harry looked around, "then let's get our business done first."

"I got you a meeting with Daphne Blake," Smythe checked his notes. "She's the one in charge of the office in the normal government that deals with the Ministry."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "When do we have that scheduled for?"

"Whenever you wish," Smythe smiled. "Fudge doesn't keep them very busy for some reason, one would almost think that he tries to keep as much information away from them as possible."

"What a surprising thing to hear," Harry shook his head. "Let's go then."

"We've got a car out front sir," Jones grabbed the door and opened it for Harry. "It'll take us to the meeting place."

"Thank you," Harry walked outside and stared in shock at the mint condition Rolls Royce Phantom II. "Where'd you get this?"

"Best you don't know," Smythe replied with a grin. "Don't worry about anyone looking for it."

"Ok," Harry shrugged. "I won't ask then."

"Let's go," Smythe motioned for Harry to get in the car. "After you sir."

"Thank you," Harry stepped into the car.

"Move over a bit would you sir," Smythe got in next to Harry. "The lad's can sit up front, but since it's my car . . ."

"By all means," Harry nodded. "Looks like we're really going to pull this off."

"Looks like," Smythe nodded. "But I wouldn't get my hopes up until everything comes together, till then anything could happen."

"It's never good to get your hopes up," Harry nodded. "It's probably fate just setting you up for another fall."

"Glad you already know that," Smythe nodded. "it's usually the first thing a new officer learns in combat, glad we don't have loose any men teaching you."

"How do you want to handle the meeting?" McLain asked from the front of the car.

"I'd suggest that we lay our cards on the table," Smythe gave his opinion. "I looked into Ms. Blake's history, she's a muggle born that went through Hogwarts in the fifties . . . left the wizarding world a year later and went into the government."

"Do you know why she left the wizarding world?" Harry took in the information.

"A lot of muggle borns leave a year or two after they graduate," Smythe replied. "They find that there aren't many jobs in the wizarding world and they realise just how bigoted the hiring process can be."

"And they go home," Harry nodded. "I guess that makes sense."

"Ministry has to pay for a small school for alumni that decide they aren't cut out for the magical life," Smythe sighed. "They spend seven years learning how to learn magic and then they have to spend another three to learn enough math and science to survive in the real world, more if they want to go to college."

"I never knew . . ." Harry shook his head, "I guess it makes sense though."

"They get thrown out into a strange world with no support," Smythe nodded. "It's surprising that any stay in the wizarding world at all, most of the ones that do get married or are so exceptional that they find a job right away."

"Like your lovely granddaughter," McLain added with a laugh. "You're always bragging about her."

"And you've never told her that you know she's a witch," Jones added. "Or about your own history because you're a coward."

"You've told us all this story twice a day since you heard she got admitted to Hogwarts," McLain shook his head. "You've got to tell her some day."

"I'm working towards it," Smythe protested. "I just forget to do it when I see her lovely face, I'm so proud of her and I just forget what I was going to do."

"Even tough old Sergeant Majors get soft when they see their lovely granddaughters?" Harry shook his head, "another illusion shattered, you are human after all."

"Don't go telling the men," Smythe laughed. "I've still got them convinced that I can walk on water."

"We're here sir," McLain called out as the car pulled up to the curb.

"Everybody get their game face on," Smythe called out. "This is an important meeting."

The three men walked into the building and walked up to the receptionist's desk.

"Do you have an appointment?" The woman glanced up with a look of annoyance.

"Mr. Potter to see Ms. Blake," Jones replied.

"Go right in," the woman waved her hand towards the door.

"Mr. Potter," the woman walked past Harry and grabbed a bemused Smythe's hand. "How good of you to come, please have a seat."

"Don't have much call to deal with the wizarding world do you?" Smythe grinned widely, "I'm not Harry Potter."

"Then?" The woman turned to look at McLain and Jones, "who is Harry Potter?"

"I'm afraid that would be me," Harry reddened.

"You?" The woman's eyes widened, "but you're so young? I heard that Harry Potter defeated the last dark lord."

"I've faced him several times but I haven't defeated him yet," Harry shrugged. "Him being back is part of what we came to talk to you about."

"He's back?" The woman's eyes widened, "forgive me for asking but why wasn't I told before?"

"At a guess," Harry smirked. "It's because Fudge is an idiot and he was trying to cover his ass, they just admitted that he was back recently after he attacked the Ministry."

"I see," Daphne nodded. "How did you defeat the dark lord what's his name the first time? You couldn't have been more than a year or two old."

"Killing curse bounced off and reflected back to him," Harry explained. "I'm not sure how that worked."

"I guess that explains that," the woman nodded. "Why do you need to speak with me?"

"For several reasons that I'd rather not get into, I am going to have to be the one that kills Voldemort." Upon seeing the woman's confused expression, "that's the name Tom Riddle has chosen for when he plays dark lord."

"I see," Daphne nodded. "Please continue."

"I managed to force Fudge to give me a rather large budget and authorization to do things my way," Harry smirked. "He wasn't happy about that, I need your help to get my men back into the Army."

"What?" This was the last thing she expected to hear. "Hold on a moment, I have a feeling that there are some other people that have to hear this."

"If you think so," Harry shrugged. "Then I have no objections."

"Priscilla?" She called out to her secretary, "go get General Montblanc and someone from the office at the end of the hall."

"What should I tell them this is about?"

"Tell them it has to do with what my office is supposed to be dealing with," Blake replied. "And not what it actually does."

"Ok," the confused secretary left and returned with two old and rather distinguishing men. One in a uniform and the other in a wrinkled grey suit.

"You called us for something Daphne?" The man in the grey suit asked with a sleepy look, he appeared to be nothing more than a mid level bureaucrat in an unimportant job.

"Yes thank you for coming," Daphne smiled. "You may go now Priscilla."

The group waited until the door closed and as an extra measure Daphne pulled out her seldom used wand and cast several privacy and locking charms.

"Mr. Potter here has some things to say," Daphne replied. "And I think you need to hear them, I think it's long past time you heard them."

Harry spent the next five hours explaining every aspect of the wizarding world and its current conflict. The men listened in silence and then began asking questions, they asked about the background of every major and several minor players, they asked about the structure of the wizarding government and the importance of blood status. Harry quickly found himself overwhelmed by the questions and had to resort to the unfortunate answer of 'I don't know' or even worse 'I think.'

"I'm sorry I don't know more," Harry felt like he'd been pulled through a ringer. "But I grew up in a normal setting and I've only really been exposed to the wizarding world through school."

"Isolated environment," the man in the wrinkled suit that neglected to provide his name nodded. "Do you know who would have the answers to all these questions."

"Yes," Harry nodded. "Why?"

"Because I'd like to know them at some point," the man in the wrinkled suit smiled. "What do you think general?"

"I'd like to hear what he wants to do first," the General replied. "Then we can either see if we can build off his plan or if we have to make a new one."

"I want to form a regiment," Harry spoke up surprising himself. "Originally I just planned to learn as much about firearms as I could so I could kill more of them . . . so I could kill as many of them as I could before they took me down or I got lucky and ran out of people to kill."

"And now?" The man in the grey suit asked gently.

"Now I'd like to form a regiment to fight him," Harry replied. "I know I can't do this alone and I think I found the men who can help me."

"What men?" The man in the grey suit smiled and Harry felt as if he were with old friends.

"Can you do magic?" Harry asked bluntly.

"What?" The man in the wrinkled suit hadn't expected that question.
"Why do you ask."

"Because you keep changing," Harry's eyebrows came together.
"When you came in, you were nothing special . . . my eyes skipped over you. Now, now you're my best friend and for some reason I want to trust you."

"Got you pegged," the General couldn't conceal his grin.

"And you didn't answer my question either," Harry fixed the man with a piercing gaze.

"No I can't do magic," the man shook his head. "And most people don't think anything about . . . what I do. Set your mind at ease, what I do is the product of practice and skill and not spell work."

"Ok," Harry took a deep breath. "As I told you, there are three major groups."

"Dumbledore, The Ministry, and Voldemort." The man nodded, please continue.

"I was a member of Dumbledore's group, but recent events have driven me away from him." Harry winced at the memory, "I could join the Ministry but that would be asking to be sold out."

"And Voldemort is the enemy," the General nodded. "So you came to us."

"Yes," Harry nodded. "I need your help to make it official, I could do it without you but it wouldn't be as effective if I didn't have official backing."

"You said you wanted to form a Regiment?"

"I went to the Sergeant Major to learn more about my revolver," Harry replied. "He told me that there were hundreds of squib ex-soldiers that would kill for the chance to go back to the army."

"Old men?"

"The wizarding world is different then this one," Harry replied. "How old do you think Smythe is?"

"Fifty?" The General pursed his lips, "maybe sixty."

"Almost a hundred sir," Smythe smiled. "I've got enough magic for the long life but not enough for the spells, I fought in every war the empire was in from the first great war until my retirement after Korea cooled down."

"And there are more men like you?" The General was astounded.

"There are men that fought the Zulu," Smythe replied. "And a few years ago we lost the last man that'd been to Waterloo and fought Nappy."

"Gods," the General shook his head. "An entire unit of men like you, what would you like?"

"Just what Mr. Potter said," Smythe replied. "Officially being recognized as a unit in Her Majesty's Army."

"That's all?"

"That's all," Smythe nodded. "Though I wouldn't mind if you would see your way to releasing some old and forgotten equipment."

"That you just happen to know the location of," the General nodded. "I think I can do that."

"How are you planning to get it through channels?" The man in the grey suit interrupted, "I don't wish to rain on anyone's parade but it is something we have to consider."

"We thought about hiding it as a show unit," Harry spoke up. "A bunch of old men that are allowed to come back in uniform to march and to show the way things used to be."

"That could work," the man in the gray suit nodded. "Good suggestion."

"Thank you," Harry nodded. "The only problem is that I'm a bit young for the company."

"A bunch of old men and the young officer sent to command them," the General grinned. "It wouldn't raise too many eyebrows if they were given a few young officers, we'll make it look like a school for officers as much as it is a ceremonial unit."

"Smythe?" Harry turned to the man for his opinion.

"It could work sir," Smythe nodded. "We'll rotate the units that teach the General's junior Officers and the ones who hunt the insurgents."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "Does that sound good to you General."

"It sounds great to me Mr. Potter . . ."

"Major Potter," Jones interrupted. "If we're going to do this we need to give Mr. Potter the rank to take his position."

"Isn't he a bit young for that rank?" The General asked in a mild tone.

"Mr. Potter has seen more combat against this enemy than almost anyone still alive," McLain spoke up. "We did a bit of checking and were more than a bit impressed by what we found."

"Killed four of them the night he came to meet me," Smythe put in his own two cents. "Put them down calm as could be and then joined me for a drink, didn't let it affect him one bit."

"A young officer that'd been on detached duty with my office," the man in the grey suit nodded. "A bit young for his rank but as his file is and always will be sealed . . ."

"How do you explain the fact that he won't be able to attend many of the official unit events?" The General asked curiously.

"Whoever said that he left my office," the man in the grey suit shrugged. "Of course he can't talk about what he does, of course he goes out and returns with strange injuries."

"Could work," the General nodded. "You willing to put in the time and training needed to make it work?"

"If it doesn't interfere with what I'm doing now," Harry nodded. "People are dieing, both magical and non magical."

"We're thinking long term," the General smiled. "This conflict of yours won't last forever, I give it a few years before you break it. After that, well let's just say that we might have other places a unit like yours could be used and we're willing to spend several years building it to where we'd like it to be."

"I'll do it," Harry nodded. "Anything else?"

"A few things," the General nodded. "Equipment and so on."

"Enfields and Martinis," Smythe grinned. "Most of the men haven't so much as seen the newer stuff, sides it'll be good for the new gentlemen to get use to carrying something heavy."

"Sounds good to me," the man in the grey suit nodded. "Do you have anything to add before we get down to the details Major Potter?"

"No," Harry shook his head. "Thank you."

The group spent the next several hours discussing every aspect of Harry's new unit, from the uniforms to the organization and other equipment.

"We'll have to meet again Major," the General stood up and yawned. "But for the moment I think we're done."

"Do you have a way to contact me?" Harry blinked the sleep out of his eyes.

"We'll manage," the man in the grey suit nodded. "I'll have someone take your paperwork to the club and await your signature, it should arrive later tonight."

"I'll be waiting." Harry gave a tired smile, "and I'll see what I can do about getting you more information on the wizarding world."

"I appreciate it Major Potter," the man in the grey suit nodded. "I am always happy to get new sources of information and you promise to be a very good source with information that I can't get through my usual channels."

"And I'll be happy to give it," Harry nodded. "Have a good day gentlemen."

Harry and his two men walked out of the building and got into the car.

"Where to?" McLain asked with a grin as he got into the driver's seat.

"Leaky Cauldron first," Harry replied. "There are a few things that I'd like to check and I'm sure that Tom will know what I need to know."

"On our way Major," McLain couldn't believe it was actually happening. He had escaped the sentence of death by boredom that had been passed when he retired and was getting back into the fight.

The car pulled away from the curb and Smythe looked at Harry with undisguised curiosity.

"If you don't mind my asking," Smythe began. "What is it you need to know?"

"I'm going to check to see if I can get someone from one of the magical clothing shops to make the uniforms," Harry replied. "I'd like to get some enchantments on them to make them more comfortable and maybe more damage resistant."

"Oh," Smythe nodded. "Sensible I suppose, don't go overboard."

"Why not?" Harry looked up.

"Officers pay for their own clothing and equipment," Smythe replied. "It wouldn't do for the men to have better than they could afford."

"Why?"

"It would affect moral for one thing," Smythe sighed. "Like I said, some of these men are very old and they have a different way of looking at the world."

"We'll see what happens," Harry shrugged.

"That we shall Major," Smythe nodded.

"We're here sir," Jones hopped out of the car and opened Harry's door.

"Thank . . ."

Jones seemed to explode into movement, throwing himself into apparently empty space and seconds later McLain arrived holding an evil looking blade in his left hand.

"Got someone here sir," Jones tightened his grip. "What would you like us to do?"

"One moment," Harry walked forward and after a few moments of groping, managed to find and pull down the hood on the invisibility cloak. "Let her go . . . hello Tonks."

"Wotcher Harry," the Pink Haired Auror's cheeks had a pink tint. "Watch where you put those hands next time, ok?"

"What are you doing here Tonks?" Harry sighed.

"Looking for you," she smiled. "I thought I was giving you a bit of protection . . . guess I was wrong huh?"

"Take off your cloak," Harry shook his head. "We don't want any muggles seeing you."

"Street's charmed so that they don't notice anything unusual," Tonks smiled. "With so many magic folk going in and out of the Cauldron . . ."

"I got it," Harry nodded.

"How did you notice me?" Tonks frowned, "I didn't trip or anything."

"I smelled your perfume," Jones shrugged. "And didn't see anyone around."

"Oh," the Auror nodded. "I guess that makes sense."

"Goodbye Tonks," Harry got back into the car.

"Where you going Harry?"

"Not here," Harry motioned for the men to get back into the car.

"Harry?"

"No offence," Harry called out as the car pulled away. "But I'd rather keep what I'm doing a secret for now."

"You said her name was Tonks?" Smythe asked mildly.

"Last name," Harry nodded. "Hates her first."

"She wouldn't happen to be a black would she?" McLain asked with a smile, "she looks like a Black."

"She looks like whatever she wants to," Harry replied. "But yes she is a Black on her mother's side."

"She's Theo's great granddaughter," Jones added. "I'm sure of it."

"How could one of us have a Black in the family tree?" McLain shook his head, "especially by marriage."

"Her father was muggle born," Harry spoke up. "And her Mother was disowned because of it."

"That explains that," Jones nodded. "Thank you sir."

"She said she was trying to protect you?" Smythe asked with a grin, "don't see why you left such a cute bodyguard behind."

"She reports to Dumbledore," Harry shrugged. "I like her but I don't trust her to keep quiet about anything she might see."

"Ah," the men nodded.

"Send someone to check on the uniforms," Harry nodded. "I can't show my face but that doesn't mean that no one can, I'd like the men to be able to wear them home tomorrow."

"I'll take care of it," McLain nodded. "Anything else Major?"

The car pulled up to the Regimental Club and the men got out and walked to the door.

"You've brought your guest again Sergeant Major?" The old man at the door nodded to Harry.

"No," Smythe shook his head. "I've brought the Regimental commander to oversee the enlistments."

"What?" The old man's eyes widened in shock, "so the rumors are true?"

"We met with the government today," Smythe confirmed. "They should be sending over a man with the paperwork soon."

"Bless you sir," the old man took Harry's hand. "Bless you."

"I expect that you'll be enlisting then," Harry nodded. "I'll be happy to have you with us."

"Gather everyone," Smythe ordered. "I want them to watch when Mr. Potter signs the papers to make it official and I think Mr. Potter will want to be there to give them the oath."

The men gathered and watched Harry with a sense of hope, here was the man that would make all their dreams come true.

"He's here," the doorman called out as he ushered a young Lieutenant whose uniform marked him as a General's dogsbody.

"Major Potter?" The young man saluted, "it is with great pleasure that I present you with your commission and your royal warrant to muster a regiment."

"Thank you," Harry took the stack of documents and quickly looked through them.

"Let me be the first to congratulate you sir," the young officer nodded. "And to wish you luck."

The men gathered round to watch as Harry signed his commission and made things official.

"Lines start at this desk," Smythe called out. "Come here to add your name to the list then go to Major Potter to give your oath."

The men lined up eagerly and Harry spent the rest of the night swearing in his new family.

"Ok," Harry's voice was hoarse. "You lot have tomorrow . . . today off, spend time with your families if you have them and welcome to the 95th Rifles."

A raged cheer rose from the ranks, they were home.

AN: If you're wondering about the car, it was destroyed in an air raid in 1939 . . . officially anyway. Major is a bit light for a regimental commander but I'm not going to make Harry anything higher, he

shouldn't even be that high but it fits the story so the world is twisted. I didn't include several pages of the group discussing the relative merits of wool verses cotton uniforms and camouflage verses redcoat or green jacket because I doubt that would be of any interest to most of you and it would come off as ha ha look at what I know from my standpoint.

Majors Should Marry

"Grandpa's here," Hermione called out to her parents as the old man's car pulled into the lot. "And he's wearing a uniform?"

"I'm sure he'll explain it to you if you ask him," Hermione's mother smiled. She always enjoyed her grandfather's visits.

"How's the prettiest girl in the world?" Smythe was dressed in pair of grey pants and an odd green uniform jacket with black facing and white piping. "I've got some exciting news for you."

"What's that?" Hermione smiled, being around her grandfather made her feel like a little girl again.

"Let's all go inside and I'll tell you," Smythe waved them in.

"Hello Grandfather," Hermione's mother opened the door. "How are you today?"

"Hello Jane, I'm better than I've been in the past forty years," the old man replied. "Now everyone gather round, I've got some great news to share."

"Have a seat," Hermione's father motioned towards the chairs. "And tell us what you have to share."

"Did you join one of those reenactment groups?" Hermione stared at the odd uniform.

"Better," Smythe grinned. "I'm back in the army."

"How?" Hermione couldn't figure it out, "you're almost a hundred years old."

"There's been a new regiment formed," the old man replied. "Full of us old men and well . . . there's something I should have mentioned about our family a few years ago."

"What's that?" Jane asked with a smile.

"Well," the old man gave a nervous smile. "For one thing, Hermione's not the first one of us to go to Hogwarts."

"What?" Hermione's jaw dropped, "you went to Hogwarts."

"No," the old man shook his head. "But my sister, parents, and grandparents all did."

"You're a Squib?" Hermione's eyes widened, "why didn't you tell me?"

"I keep planning on it," the old man shrugged. "But it was so amusing to watch you try to explain where you went to school and to keep me in the dark that well . . . I just didn't have the heart to give up one of my few sources of entertainment."

"Do I have any magical cousins?" Hermione perked up.

"No," the old man shook his head. "I'm afraid that you and I are the last of that family line."

"Oh," Hermione nodded. "If you come from a magical family then how come you ended up in the army?"

"It was dumping ground for unwanted sons," the old man shrugged. "For both magical families and non magical families."

"Oh," Hermione twisted her mind around this latest outrage from the wizarding world.

"On the plus side it does make you the sole heir of a minor pure blood family," the old man shrugged. "Doubt it'll do much for you but I'm sure you'd like to have the library, there are a couple of books of family spells that you'll wanna have."

"Family spells?"

"Lots of old families are known for specializing in certain things," the old man shrugged. "Or at least they were at one time, our family's

specialization was spell research. The family spells are just things that never got put on the market for one reason or another."

"Oh," Hermione nodded. "Why are you going back to the army . . . and how did you get them to accept you anyway?"

"There's a lot of us old men that served the Empire after being tossed out of their families," Smythe explained. "The Squibs sort of keep in touch with each other, we have a club that allows us to be with our own kind. A few days ago a man walked into our club and told us he was forming a regiment to fight that wanker that's been causing problems for the wizarding world and tonight he swore us all in."

"How can you fight him?" Hermione was worried about her favorite granddad, "you can't do magic."

"The commander killed several of them without magic the other day," Smythe grinned. "There are plenty of ways to kill people without spells, magic just opens up new ways of doing it is all."

"Oh," Hermione had a sudden idea. "Would you mind talking to a friend of mine about this?"

"Soon as the commander says I can," Smythe promised. "And speaking of the commander, he can't be much older than you are . . . he's a good man and I think he'd make a good husband for you."

"What?" Hermione stared at the old man in shock.

"I just wanna look out for you," the old man shrugged. "I did it for your mother and I did it for your grandmother, now it's your turn."

"But . . ."

"You're growing up into a lovely young lady," the old man patted her on the head. "And there's all sorts of bastards out there that will try to take advantage of that." He refrained from mentioning that he'd cheerfully kill said bastards if they tried anything.

"I don't need help with my love life," Hermione couldn't believe the direction this conversation was heading.

"I just want you to meet him is all," the old man smiled. "Who knows, you two might hit it off."

"Just meet him?" Hermione nodded.

"Just meet him," the old man confirmed. "Then we can go talk to that friend of yours."

"Ok," Hermione nodded. She just hoped Harry would appreciate the sacrifices she was making for him.

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Harry spent the day getting fitted for his new uniform by a proud Madam Malkin who insisted on doing the work herself.

"What sorts of charms would you like me to put on these?" She asked as she made the final alteration to Harry's first uniform.

"I don't know," Harry shrugged. "What do you suggest?"

"Comfort charms," she replied immediately. "At a minimum, these things are made of wool and I lined yours with silk to keep it more comfortable next your skin. It'll be very hot in the summer heat."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "Do whatever you think would be appropriate on this one and I'll try to get back to you on the rest."

"How about I just put every charm I can on it and you tell me what you like?" Madame Malkin smiled, "you've just completed my biggest order this year outside Hogwarts robes and if the stories my mother told are true then I'll be making more of these soon. I want to do something nice for you if I can."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "Thank you."

"Your boots should be up soon," Madame Malkin cast the last charm and handed Harry the new uniform. "Along with the other leather goods, black dragon hide and shined to a high gloss."

"Thank you," Harry couldn't believe how fast things were happening.

"No thank you," Madame Malkin replied. "For protecting us and for all the business you've given me today."

"Your boots are here Major," one of the old men walked in with a large package. "And there's a man here to see you."

"Who?" Harry looked up.

"He says he's here to talk about your sword sir."

"Ok," Harry nodded. Send him up.

"Yes sir," the old man nodded and took his leave.

"Put your uniform on please," Madame Malkin politely requested. "I'd like to get a look at you in it."

"Alright," Harry stepped behind a privacy screen and began donning his new clothing.

"Major Potter?" A small man with a large book walked into the room.

"Just a second," Harry replied. "And I'll be right out."

"Take your time," the small man replied.

"What did you want to see me about?" Harry stepped out from behind the screen.

"I'm from the blade maker that your men contacted and I was hoping to find out which pattern you intended to adopt for your new regiment." The small man opened his book, "if you'll look at these pictures."

"That one," Harry pointed at one of the swords. "Can you enchant them?"

"The Pattern 1796 light cavalry saber," the man nodded. "Excellent choice sir, and I regret to inform you that we can not enchant this for you. We can however provide you with a list of approved sub contractors that would be willing to do the work."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "That's fine."

"One more thing Major," the man paused. "Is this the sword that you will require your officers to purchase? Or do you have any specifications on what they may or may not use?"

"Not at the moment," Harry shrugged. "Whatever they want so long as it isn't too ornate."

"Thank you sir," the man picked up his book. "I'll have your sword here as soon as possible."

"Good," Harry nodded. "Thank you."

"The Sergeant Major is back sir," McLain entered the room. "And he's got a surprise for you."

"Really?" Harry nodded, "I don't suppose I'll be happy about this surprise will I?"

"I saw her come in," McLain smiled. "She's a very nice looking surprise."

"Great," Harry sighed. "I don't suppose there's any way out of this?"

"And have Smythe think you don't like his lovely granddaughter?" McLain was enjoying this far more than he should, "I'll just leave to give you some privacy."

"Send them up," Harry nodded.

"Yes sir," McLain nodded. Leaving the room with a grin on his face, McLain walked down the steps to great Smythe and his lovely granddaughter.

"Well?" Smythe asked with a raised eyebrow, "what'd he say?"

"The Major said to come right up," McLain smiled. "And I must say that it's a pleasure to finally meet your lovely granddaughter who you've talked so much about."

"You talk about me?" Hermione was surprised at the embarrassed expression on her great grandfather's face.

"All the time," McLain nodded. "It's always 'my lovely granddaughter is the smartest girl in the world' or 'my lovely granddaughter is the prettiest girl in the world' and one time it was . . ."

"She gets the picture," Smythe interrupted. "And we don't want to keep the Major waiting."

"Have fun," McLain watched the bets being placed out of the corner of his eye.

"Thank you," Smythe took Hermione's arm. "Let's go hon."

"Remember," Hermione said as they walked up the stairs. "You're going to help my friend after this."

"I remember," Smythe knocked on the door to Harry's office.

"Come in," Harry called out. "It's a pleasure to meet you . . . Hermione?"

"Harry?" Hermione stared at Harry's uniform, "what are you doing here? Why aren't you with your relatives?"

"You know each other then?" Smythe couldn't figure out if this was a good or a bad thing.

"Yes," Harry nodded. "She's my best friend, we go to school together."

"Oh," but he was leaning towards good. "I'll just leave you two alone then."

"Why aren't you at your relatives house Harry?" Hermione looked at him in confusion, "and why are you in that uniform."

"Haven't been reading the papers then?" Harry smiled, "or at least not today's?"

"No," Hermione shook her head. "What's happening."

"There was a death eater attack near my house," Harry motioned for Hermione to take a seat. "It was right across the street."

"Was anybody hurt?" Hermione bit her lower lip.

"Four death eaters," Harry nodded. "I killed them."

"Oh Harry," Hermione looked at her friend sadly.

"Then Dumbledore showed up," Harry continued. "And yelled at me, he said that they would never have a chance to change since they were dead and he compared me to Voldemort."

"What?" Hermione couldn't believe what she was hearing, "are you sure you didn't misunderstand him?"

"I'm sure," Harry nodded. "I told him that I was more concerned about the victims. There were aurors and reporters and even Fudge. Dumbledore got me so mad that I'm afraid I lost my temper."

"What did you do?" Hermione was worried about her friend.

"I told them that they could save themselves," Harry laughed. "They were so stunned when I told them that Voldemort could have them and that I could care less what happened to them. I said that they'd

have to pay me to fight for them after the way they slandered me last year."

"What did Dumbledore do?"

"He told me I couldn't quit," Harry snorted. "So I pulled out one of those fake wands we got last year and snapped it, you should have seen the look on his face when I did that."

"Harry," Hermione was scandalized. "How could you do something like that."

"He just got me so mad," Harry shook his head. "So I left, I went to the Leaky Cauldron and got a room and after a few meetings I've found myself the commander of a regiment made up of old men."

"I still don't understand how that happened?" Hermione shook her head, "how did you meet up with my grandfather?"

"I read his book," Harry pulled the offending item off the desk and tossed it to Hermione. "I killed the death eaters with my grandfather's pistol and I wrote him to learn more, next thing I knew I was a Major and you were standing in front of me."

"Hermione?" Harry's face nearly cracked open with the force of his smile, "I just want you to know that I'm really glad to see you. I was afraid that he was going to send in someone I wouldn't be able to stand."

"Oh," Hermione voice became subdued. "I understand, dependable old Hermione, not some scarlet woman that Harry would have to deal with."

"What's wrong?" Harry looked at his friend in concern, "did something happen?"

"I'm just worried about the fact that no one seems to realise that I'm a girl," Hermione shrugged. "It's nothing, how did you get mixed up in this?"

"I realise that you're a girl," Harry ignored his friend's attempt to change the subject. "And a very attractive one I might add, is there anything else bothering you?"

"Oh?" Hermione looked up.

"And I'd much rather have an attractive girl like you here than someone else," Harry smiled. "It's one of the reasons I broke up with Cho, she couldn't handle being around a witch as pretty as you are so she got jealous."

"Harry," Hermione asked quietly. "Do you love me?"

"Yes," Harry nodded. "And Ron and Ginny and all of you."

"That's not what I meant," Hermione frowned.

"I know," Harry nodded. "And the answer is I don't know, I know that I'm in love with the idea of being in love with you."

"What do you mean?" Hermione blinked.

"Of all the witches in Hogwarts, you're the only one I'd trust to love me and not the-boy-who-lived." Harry explained, "you've been my friend from the beginning. If I want a relationship then it's either you or some muggle that's never heard of the wizarding world."

"So you're being pushed towards me?"

"No," Harry shook his head. "What I am is extraordinarily fond of you, I find you physically attractive, and I like being around you."

"But you don't love me?"

"But I'm not sure what love is," Harry corrected. "From what I do know, the idea of falling in love at first sight is a fairy tale . . . I could be wrong but it seems to me that love should be based on a strong foundation and not dependent on the chance that one just happens to see the right person."

"I see," Hermione nodded. "What about Ron at the Yule Ball?"

"That was a healthy dose of physical desire," Harry snorted. "Something that I also experienced, if that was love at first sight then half the castle fell in love with you."

"Harry," Hermione turned away. "Thank you."

"You're welcome Hermione," Harry smiled. "Though if you don't mind, I would like to have an arrangement with you."

"What kind of arrangement?" Hermione asked suspiciously.

"I just found out that I'm supposed to go to some . . . social events," Harry frowned. "Apparently it's one of my responsibility as an officer and a gentleman. I was wondering . . . well, would you mind going with me to these things? I'd rather have you along so at least I'll have someone to talk to and it'll give me a way of turning down invitations."

"Oh Harry," Hermione laughed. "Of course I'll protect you from all those mean girls that just want to use you. Harry Potter, he can face dark lords but runs away from dark ladies."

"It's not funny," Harry protested. "They have a saying, 'A Subaltern may not marry, Captains might marry, Majors should marry, and Lieutenant-Colonels must marry.' I'm a Major, just think of what will happen when Teen Witch finds out about this."

"Don't worry," Hermione was trying unsuccessfully to hide her amusement. "I'm sure your men will protect you."

"They're the ones most likely to tell Teen Witch," Harry muttered darkly. "A few of them have already dropped hints that I should find myself a wife."

"You make it sound like they have nothing better to do than to gossip about your love life." Hermione started laughing, "next thing you know they'll be buying Teen Witch so they can get the latest news."

"Can we get past this?" Harry's face reddened.

"It's ok Harry," Hermione cooed. "I'll protect you from all those interfering old men too, you don't have to worry about their schemes."

"You really think this is funny huh?" Harry smirked, "do I need to remind you why you're here?"

"Why do you have a green uniform?" Hermione changed the subject, "I always thought they were red."

"It's a rifle regiment," Harry explained. "Scouts and skirmishers, the story goes that they needed the green to help blend in to the surrounding background and do their jobs."

"So that's why they wore green," Hermione nodded. "I guess that makes sense."

"That's the official reason anyway," Harry nodded. "The Unofficial reason is that it was done so that the brass could pretend that all those unsporting irregulars were in a different army."

AN: Hermione in my opinion has very low self confidence when it comes to being a girl, she's just one of the guys or that bookish nerd. That's why I wrote her the way I did it the chapter, she needed assurance that she was pretty. Like it or not, I had to put a girl on Harry's arm, he's a field grade officer and traditionally he needs to have a wife for social reasons. He's also the commander of a on the cover ceremonial unit and will need a wife for that also, I seriously doubt that there will be a marriage in this fic but Hermione is going to be used as the female. I could have used one of the other girls but they didn't fit, I just can't see Tonks or Luna playing the part of an officer's lady for instance. I suppose I could have used one of the pureblood princesses but I don't feel like fleshing out one of the Slytherin girls, at least not in this stor and it would have been difficult to have them adjust to the Muggle world quick enough for the story.

A little Death in Diagon

"There are some things that I was hoping you'd help me with," Harry smiled. "I have several people asking quite a lot of questions about the wizarding world, questions that I can't answer."

"And you want my help with that?" Hermione relaxed, this was an area she was comfortable with.

"I'll also need someone well versed in pure blood customs," Harry nodded.

"Well," Hermione frowned. "That takes the Weasleys out of it, they probably know most of them but they don't seem to be too concerned about them."

"Remus might know," Harry suggested.

"No," Hermione shook her head. "He probably wouldn't, he's been isolated all his life."

"The problem is," Harry frowned. "That most of the people that would know these things are on the other side."

"What about Dumbledore?"

"He'd know," Harry nodded. "But I don't trust him, and I'm afraid that he'd be able to figure out too much from the questions."

"Luna . . . forget I suggested her," Hermione shook her head. "Why don't we take a look at the DA, I'm sure that we'd be able to find someone in that."

"Could work," Harry nodded. "But why don't we take care of that later."

"What do you want to do now?" Hermione looked around.

"Why don't we just relax," Harry suggested. "The only thing missing is Ron, I gave the men the day off and I think I deserve to have a bit of time to myself."

Harry and Hermione spent the next few hours chatting until they were interrupted by a knock on the door.

"Begging your pardon sir," Smythe interrupted. "But I'm afraid I promised to take her to go meet a friend of hers."

"This is the friend I wanted you to talk to," Hermione smiled at her great grandfather. "But thanks for remembering your promise."

"No problem," the old Sergeant Major smiled. "Would you like to come visit the family vault then? I'm sure the Major wouldn't mind coming along if you'd like him to."

"Sure," Harry confirmed. "If you want me to."

"If you don't mind," Hermione nodded. "I've never been down to the vaults before and I was hoping to get a chance to compare yours with mine to see if there are any obvious differences."

"Fine," Harry nodded. "Let's go."

"Begging your pardon sir," Smythe smiled. "But now would be a good time to put the first guards in the alley."

"Grab a few men to join us then," Harry nodded. "So that we can be on our way."

"Won't take but a moment sir," Smythe nodded.

"What was he talking about?" Hermione watched her grandfather leave.

"We're planning to put a few armed guards in Diagon Alley," Harry replied.

"Why?" Hermione frowned, "wouldn't you want to keep all your men together?"

"Sometimes you do," Harry nodded. "But placing them there ahead of time provides a few things such as; security in case of attack, a visible sign that things are being done, and it gives me a way to keep them busy."

"Keep them busy?" Hermione smirked.

"Smythe tells me that busy enlisted men are happy enlisted men," Harry shrugged. "He said it was better to have them fill sand bags for no purpose then to let them sit around and get ideas."

"Oh," Hermione blinked.

"The detail is ready sir," Smythe knocked on the door. "So we can leave whenever you're ready."

"What should I do?" Harry buckled on his revolver, "just walk in and let you follow me?"

"Well sir," Smythe smiled. "I was going to suggest that you walk into the alley and take a few bored glances around on your way to the bank, when we get there I'll suggest a few likely places to put the men and then we can place the men wherever you wish on the way back."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "Glad one of us knows what he's doing."

"Glad you're willing to take my advice," Smythe smiled. "There's some officers that spend their entire career without learning that lesson."

"Let's get things going then," Harry offered his arm to Hermione. "Coming?"

"I'd be delighted." Hermione nodded, getting into the spirit of things.

IIIIIIII

"Hello Harry," Tom smiled as he watched the-boy-who-lived enter. "What's with the uniform?"

"I joined the army," Harry smiled. "The men that wear this work for me."

"Right," Tom nodded. "Make sure they know that they'll get a ten percent discount every time they come in here then."

"Hear that lads," Smythe called out.

"Thank you Tom," Harry nodded. "Now if you'll excuse me, I have business in the alley."

"Then I won't take anymore of your time," Tom's toothless grin widened.

"Could you save my table?" Harry smiled, "I'm hoping to have enough time to enjoy one of your lunches when I'm finished with my business in the alley."

"You'll have the best seat in the house waiting for you when you get back," Tom nodded.

"Thank you Tom," Hermione smiled.

Harry led his group out into the alley and towards the bank.

"Might I suggest that you smile a bit more sir?" Smythe fell a step behind Harry and spoke quietly so as not to be heard. "You've got us to look dangerous and humorless, wouldn't be a bad idea to play the dashing hero."

"I'll keep that in mind," Harry laughed. "Lovely day isn't it Hermione."

"I hate to think what the papers are going to make of this," Hermione smirked. "With that dashing uniform, witches are going to be throwing themselves at you."

"I thought we agreed to avoid this subject?" Harry sighed.

"You agreed to that," Hermione smirk deepened. "I didn't I . . ." A group of figures in dark robes appeared in the street and interrupted Hermione's next statement.

"Damn," Harry's hand dropped to his revolver and he began to draw it.

"Flag pole sir," Smythe calmly reminded.

"Right," Harry let the pistol fall back into its holster. "Sergeant Major, kill those death eaters . . . grab a prisoner or two for our friend in the grey suit but only if you can do it without losing anyone."

"Yes sir," Smythe nodded. "Mark your targets and wait for my command."

The men lifted their rifles and peered through the aperture.

"Fire," Smythe watched in satisfaction as the group of death eaters crumpled to the ground. "Reload . . . McLain, take a couple of men and get the Major his prisoner."

"You got it Sergeant Major." McLain fixed his bayonet and gave a cold smirk, "let's go boys."

Arthur had only been in the dark lord's service for a couple of months before one of the older death eaters had chosen him and a few of the other men for a special job. They were to go to Diagon Alley and cause a bit of trouble, to show the sheep that Potter and the Ministry couldn't protect them. Everything had been going according to plan until the head belonging to the man in front of him exploded and showered the rest of the group with bits of brain and fragments of skull.

Arthur dropped his wand and began screaming, he continued screaming as he watched several old men walk up with strange looking spears and his screams increased in volume as the old men began silencing his companions with bayonets through the chest.

"Shut up ya' bloody bastard," McLain slammed the butt of his rifle into the screaming death eater's face. "Weren't even hurt till I ruined that smile of yours." Turning to look down at another death eater, McLain smiled and the death eater's screams became a sickening gurgle.

"Well," Harry watched the group of death eaters get taken apart in less time then it took Dudley to eat his breakfast. "That went well."

"Oh god," Hermione turned away from the carnage.

"It's ok Hermione," Harry rubbed his friend's back. "It's ok."

"What was my grandfather talking about when he said flagpole," Hermione closed her eyes and frantically searched for something to think of besides the bloody mess in the street.

"He told me a story about a bunch of new officers," Harry didn't take his eyes off the group of fallen death eaters. "They were given the task of raising a new flag pole. The officers spent all day arguing about how high it should be, how much cement to use, that sort of thing."

"What happened next?" Hermione's breathing had calmed a bit.

"They wasted all day talking about it and when the general came back he was astonished to see that there was no flag pole." Harry smirked, "he asked the officers what they'd been doing and they explained that they'd been talking about how to put it up and hadn't gotten around to the construction phase. The General shook his head and took several deep calming breaths. Finally he opened his eyes again and said, 'boys . . . that's not how you put up a flag pole.' He turned to the Sergeant that had been standing unnoticed all day and spoke. 'Sergeant, you and your men put up that flag pole . . . that gentlemen is how you put up a flag pole.' It's my job to think up plans and it's the Sergeant's job to make them happen and it's the men's job to do them."

"So my grandfather was just telling you to let the men do their jobs," Hermione nodded.

"That's correct," Smythe smiled. "Looks like everything is secure sir, one prisoner and the rest are dead."

"Search him and snap his wand," Harry nodded. "Keep him out until we have a chance to think of a way to keep him from apparating out."

"Yes sir," Smythe nodded. "One of the medics has just the thing for that."

"And be sure to remind me to ask the man in the grey suit if he wants any truth potions or charms," Harry added after a moment of thought. "I have a feeling that he might be able to use them."

"Good idea sir," Smythe gave an evil smile. "I suspect that you are correct."

"Is there anything else that needs to be done before we get on with our day?" Harry glanced around.

"The prisoner sir." Smythe grinned, he was really starting to like this kid.

"Bring him along," Harry shrugged. "With any luck the goblins will have some restraints that we can borrow for him."

"And it also lets everyone else in the alley get a good look at what we did to him," Smythe grinned. "Same with leaving the bodies in a heap like that."

"I never even thought of that," Harry gave a sly smile. "But I suppose that's the reason I keep you around."

"Right you are sir," Smythe grinned.

"Well," Harry took one last look around. "If that's all taken care of then why don't we be off."

"You heard the Major," Smythe called out. "Column of twos."

"Column of twos," the men echoed as they formed their ranks.

"Ready when you are sir," Smythe's grin deepened.

"Let's go Sergeant Major," Harry offered his arm to Hermione and began walking.

Hermione felt numb as she grabbed Harry's arm. She had assumed that she knew what war was like after the Department of Mysteries until witnessing the scene of horror only a few minutes before, it was funny how things changed after they had been put into context.

"Forward," Smythe took a quick glance to the side. "March."

The few shoppers and shopkeepers of Diagon alley watched in shock as the strangely dressed men marched away from the pile of dead dark wizards.

"Bloody 'ell," Fortescue watched the men from the window of his shop. "Did you see what they just did?"

"Didn't even give the poor bastards a chance," his lone customer nodded. "Guess the Potter boy wasn't kidding when he said that he was going to do something."

"One day and he's already done more for us then Fudge and the Ministry," Fortescue nodded. "Bloody Aurors haven't even shown their face yet."

"What charm do you suppose they put on those spears?" The customer's nose wrinkled in confusion.

"Well," Fortescue scratched his chin. "I'm no expert, but I would have put a wand core in it."

"Let's you cast all sorts of spells," the customer nodded. "But it'd be a bit clumsy, guess that's why they held them up to the shoulder."

"Would also explain the smoke and the noise," Fortescue nodded. "They haven't got it quit right yet so it smokes a bit and makes loud noise, still must be some advantage or they'd just use their wands."

"I'm sure there is," the customer nodded. "That Potter boy's as sharp as a tack."

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"Halt," the goblins in front of Gringotts scowled. "Why are you wearing those uniforms?"

"I am Major Harry James Potter, Commander of the 95th rifles." Harry frowned, "and I am wearing this uniform because it is the approved uniform for the 95th rifles."

"Your pardon sir," the Goblins straightened up. "I am ashamed to admit that my first thought was that you had decided to wear it on some sort of strange whim."

"Oh," Harry blinked. "I understand, thank you for checking."

"May I announce your arrival Major Potter?" The Goblin's faces were expressionless, "I think that the branch manager and the chief of security will want to speak with you."

"You may," Harry nodded.

"Thank you sir . . . wait here if you would," the Goblins marched into the bank.

"I've never seen a goblin act that polite to anyone," Hermione whispered. "What did you do to make them show you so much respect?"

"I have no idea," Harry whispered back. "Sergeant Major?"

"Wish I could tell you," Smythe shrugged. "But I don't have a clue."

"Forgive me for keeping you waiting Major Potter," an old goblin filled the doorway. "I am Ragnuuk, manager of this branch and on behalf of Gringotts I welcome you to enter this bank in peace."

"I Thank you," Harry drew in a breath. "On behalf of the 95th rifles."

"Please," the goblin stepped aside. "Enter, I look forward to meeting with you."

"Will there be enough room for everyone?" Harry glanced back at his men.

"Security chief Gramdrake has offered his break room for their use while you are here," the old goblin nodded.

"Thank you," Harry nodded. "I hope you don't mind that I have a prisoner with me."

"Not at all," Ragnuuk shook his head. "I'll have security keep an eye on him while you are our guests."

"Thank you," Harry motioned for the prisoner to be brought forward.

"You two," Ragnuuk looked back into the bank. "Take Major Potter's prisoner to the holding cells."

"Yes sir," the goblins nodded.

"This way Major," the Goblin took Harry through the bank and into a large office. "Thank you for allowing me the honor of this meeting . . . would it be impolite to ask for an introduction to your lady friend?"

"Not at all," Harry didn't even want to think of how difficult his life would get if he gave any other answer. "This is my friend Hermione Granger."

"A pleasure," the goblin bowed. "Please take a seat."

"Thank you," Harry and Hermione sat.

"May I ask you a question," Hermione was fidgeting in her chair.

"Anything," Ragnuuk nodded.

"Not to sound rude," Hermione took a deep breath. "But why are you being so polite? Every other time I've been to Gringotts the goblins have . . . well . . ."

"Acted as if they barely tolerated the customers?" Ragnuuk raised one of his eyebrows.

"Yes," Hermione reddened.

"As you are no doubt aware," Ragnuuk smiled. "The goblin people and the wizarding world have fought many wars, what you may not be aware of is the fact that Gringotts was formed as a result of the peace treaty that ended one of the less notable skirmishes. It was thought that we could channel our warrior spirit into a less . . . violent activity."

"So you all became bankers," Hermione nodded.

"So we became bankers," Ragnuuk nodded. "And despite our current occupation, every goblin is a warrior at heart and it is only proper that we show the appropriate respect to our fellow warriors."

"Thank you," Harry nodded.

"No thank you Major," Ragnuuk smiled. "But I'm sure that you didn't come here to remind me of my heritage . . . what can I do for you?"

"I was hoping to get a chance to look at my family vault," Hermione answered. "I just found out that my great grandfather is from a wizarding family and that I'm the sole heir of the family."

"What's the family name?" Ragnuuk leaned back.

"Smythe," Hermione answered quickly.

"I remember them," Ragnuuk nodded. "Not a very large family or a very prosperous one but it was well respected . . . which is more than most families can claim. I don't mean to be rude, but I suppose you can prove your claim?"

"How do I do that?" Hermione bit her lower lip.

"Well, you could bring in a member of your family that's on the family register." The goblin held up a finger, "or if there are no surviving family members then you could bring in your family records and we can try to authenticate your claim that way."

"I could get my grandfather to come up," Hermione nodded. "He came in with us, but . . . don't you have a charm that can prove that I come from my family?"

"I'm afraid that there is no such charm," Ragnuuk shrugged. "No one has been able to find a quality that is unique to a family line. Take the Weasleys, they are known for having red hair but that does not make everyone with red hair a Weasley."

"Guess the muggle world is ahead of the wizarding world then," Harry smirked. "Hermione's grandfather is my Sergeant Major, he should be with the rest of the men."

"I'll have someone get him," Ragnuuk leaned forward with an expression of interest, "what did you mean when you said that the muggle world was ahead?"

"They have techniques to determine what family line people are part of," Hermione answered.

"Do you think that you could design a spell to check this?" Ragnuuk looked excited, "or at the very least a method to disguise the muggle origin?"

"Maybe," Hermione frowned. "It wouldn't be all that hard to hide the fact that the tests were done by muggles . . . I'm not sure how difficult it would be to create a new charm."

"Please do so," Ragnuuk's eyes were shining. "The potential value of such a charm is . . . enormous."

"I will," Hermione nodded.

"Forgive me for going off on a tangent," the goblin reddened. "Your grandfather and family register should be here soon."

"Thank you," Hermione squeezed Harry's hand.

"Do you mind if we talk a little business before then?" Harry sighed, "I have a few things that need to be set up."

"Be my guest," the goblin nodded.

"I need to set up a unit account," Harry began. "I was able to get Fudge to sign a letter of Marque and Reprisal."

"And you're going to need a place to store your treasure," Ragnuuk nodded. "We can easily set something like that up, anything else?"

"I'm sure there is," Harry shook his head. "But I don't know what they are at the moment."

"If I may offer a suggestion," Ragnuuk gave a cold grin. "You could also have us store your prisoners."

"What?" Harry's eyebrows raised in shock.

"We have secure facilities and are separate from the Ministry," Ragnuuk's smile deepened. "That means Fudge can not let them out no matter how much he gets bribed."

"We can do that?" Harry's eyes widened, "I was going to store them with the muggles but this sounds better."

"We would be willing to hold them for you for a small percentage of your treasure," Ragnuuk shrugged. "Respect only takes you so far, profit will take you all the way."

"Draw up the papers and send them to my people," Harry nodded. "I'm going to need a way to get the prisoners here without drawing any attention and I'll probably need a way to get muggles here fast."

"Both easily done," Ragnuuk nodded. "Portkeys for the prisoners and . . . hmmm."

"What is it?" Hermione entered the conversation.

"How often will you need to get access for the muggles?"

"Quite a bit," Harry shrugged. "I think, I could be wrong but I would guess that there will be a lot of traffic."

"In that case, could I suggest something unusual?"

"Sure," Harry nodded.

"Tell me," Ragnuuk grinned. "How familiar are you with floo travel?"

"I don't care for it," Harry smirked. "Hermione?"

"It was discovered by accident by a team working on a way to make a fire that would fuel itself," Hermione took a deep breath. "Later . . ."

"That's enough," Ragnuuk stared at Hermione in shock. "That's more than enough, I can see why you keep her around."

"She has her uses," Harry ignored Hermione's outraged glare. "What did you want to suggest?"

"Our curse breakers have been working with a team in the Department of Mysteries to create a new form of travel," the goblin paused to collect his thoughts. "They have not managed to perfect it but it can currently provide two way travel between two connecting doors."

"Huh?" Harry blinked.

"If you go through a door here you come out another door in another place," Hermione explained. "Doesn't sound very versatile, can you connect several doors together?"

"Not yet," Ragnuuk shook his head. "It's in the early stages of development but it already shows great promise."

"Why did you develop something to fill a niche that is already occupied by floo travel?" Hermione's eyes lit up.

"Floo is a good way to transport people if you ignore the unpleasantness," Ragnuuk pulled a bag out of his desk. "But it is not so good for transporting unaccompanied items, we're hoping to use this new system to transfer large amounts of gold between different branches."

"Makes sense," Harry nodded. "How soon can we put up one of these . . . door ways?"

"About a day," Ragnuuk replied. "Just tell me where you want it put up and I shall make the arrangements."

"Thank you," Harry nodded. "I . . ."

"I have the file you requested sir," a knock on the door interrupted Harry's musings. "And the gentleman that comes with it."

"Come in," Ragnuuk called out.

"Here is the file sir," a young looking goblin placed a large book on Ragnuuk's desk.

"Thank you," Ragnuuk gave a quick nod. "Welcome to my office Sergeant Major Smythe."

"Thank you," Smythe gave a curt nod. "It's been a while since I've come into Gringotts, bit strange to see it after all this time."

"I'm sure," Ragnuuk nodded. "We're here to update your family register."

"Yes," Smythe nodded. "I'm the last one of my family line and I want to add my daughter and son in law, my granddaughter and grandson in law, and finally my lovely great granddaughter Hermione."

"I take it that Hermione is the only one with magical ability?" Ragnuuk raised his eyebrow.

"Yes, she is." Smythe nodded. "I have the birth and death certificates right here."

"If you could hand them over," Ragnuuk opened the large book. "I'll make the additions and issue the young lady a key."

"Thank you," Smythe handed over the required documents. "Glad to see that the old vault will get some use."

"Everything appears to be in order," Ragnuuk made several notations. "Your key will be waiting for you at your mine car . . . is there anything else you require?"

Harry glanced at his companions faces. "No, I think we've got everything settled for now."

"Very good then," Ragnuuk smiled. "Then I won't take up anymore of your time, feel free to see me for any reason . . . even just to chat."

"I will," Harry nodded. "And you may feel free to visit us at any time and for any reason."

"I'll take you up on that I'm sure," Ragnuuk smiled. "Good day then."

"Good day"

"Do you know where the mine cars are?" Hermione asked as they left the room, "all my family ever does is exchange a few pounds at the front desk."

"It's this way," Harry nodded. "It's been a few years but I think I still remember where they are."

"You two go ahead," Smythe had a knowing grin on his face. "I'd better see to the lads."

"You're not coming?" Hermione pouted. "I was hoping you could tell me more about the family."

"We'll have plenty of time to speak about the family later," Smythe patted Hermione on the head. "But for now, I've got to keep an eye on things up top."

"Ok," Hermione gave a slow nod. "Come on Harry."

Harry took Hermione to meet one of the mine cars and gave Hermione an evil grin, "hope you like roller coasters."

"Why?" Hermione's eyes narrowed.

"Because the ride down to the vaults is the best roller coaster rides I've ever been on."

"Oh . . . wait, have you ever been on a roller coaster?"

"No," Harry shook his head. "why?"

"No reason," Hermione allowed herself to relax. "Let's go."

"Excuse me?" Harry called out to one of the goblins.

"What do you . . . excuse me Major," the goblin turned respectful upon seeing Harry's uniform. "What can I do for you?"

"We need to get down to a couple vaults," Harry smiled. "If you don't mind."

"It would be my pleasure," the goblin nodded. "Keys please."

Harry and Hermione handed over their keys and stepped into the cart.

"Do you need anything else?" Hermione blinked, "how do you know I didn't steal that key?"

"You can't handle the key without being authorised to," the goblin smiled. "Each account has a master list that keeps unauthorised users from handling the keys to that account."

"Is there any way I could look at my account's master list?" Harry frowned.

"Of course," the goblin nodded. "Just ask one of the desk clerks at the desk and show them your key."

"Thank you," Harry put his arm around Hermione's shoulders. "Ready?"

"I know what you're trying to do and it isn't going to work Harry," Hermione smiled. "But nice try."

"I hope one of us knows what you're talking about," Harry shot Hermione a strange look.

"Here we go," the goblin started the car. "We'll be visiting the Smythe vault first."

"Ok," Hermione smiled. "I knew it couldn't be as bad as you said it would be Harrrrrrrrrrry."

Hermione squealed as the car began to pick up speed and her arms tightened around Harry's waist.

"Told you," Harry allowed himself to enjoy the feeling of having Hermione hold him as close as she could.

"Here we are," the cart slowed down. "Um . . . we've stopped."

"Hear that Hermione?" Harry rubbed his friend's back, "we're at your vault."

"Thank you," Hermione was still tense. "I never liked roller coasters."

"It'll be ok," Harry helped the girl out of her mine car. "You'll get use to it after a few times and I'll come with you whenever you need to visit your vault."

"Ok," Hermione finally let go of the boy's hand.

"Let's go look in your vault," Harry was trying to make the girl feel better and feeling a bit guilty about the fact that he'd enjoyed the ride down so much. "Your grandfather said it was filled with books."

"That's right," Hermione perked up. "Come on Harry."

"Right behind you," Harry marveled at how fast he could distract his friend with the promise of new knowledge.

"Harry come quick," Hermione sounded excited. "This place is full of books and it has hundreds of rolls of parchment."

"Wow," Harry was impressed. "Looks like more books than Hogwarts."

"Hogwarts has more," Hermione shook her head. "But these look better, the books in Hogwarts range from low to high level . . . this looks like it has nothing but high level books and research notes."

"Great," Harry looked around and noticed a small pile of gold. "Looks like you have some gallons too."

"Hmmm?" Hermione looked up from a book she'd been reading, "did you say something?"

"Better grab a few books," Harry smiled. "We can't stay here forever."

"But I don't even have a good idea of everything this place contains," Hermione bit her lower lip. "It'll take months before I even start to have an idea."

"I'd rather not spend months in your vault," Harry shook his head. "Aside from the fact that I have things to do, we don't have any food."

"Give me a few minutes," Hermione's eyes glazed over.

"Ok," Harry nodded. "I'll just stand here and wait for you to get done."

Hermione spent several minutes hovering around the room and soon built up a large stack of books.

"You do know that we can come back don't you?" Harry was more than a little amused by his friend's behavior, "and that the books are probably safer here than they would be out of the vault."

"Yes but . . ." Hermione looked around, "I . . . I guess this will be enough."

"Ok," Harry smiled. "I'll help you carry them out."

"Thanks Harry," Hermione smiled.

"Done already?" The goblin nodded, "to the next vault then?"

"Yes please," Harry put his arm around Hermione again. "Are you gonna be ok Hermione?"

"I think so," Hermione squeezed her eyes shut. "Let's go."

To Hermione's relief, the ride to Harry's vault was mercifully short.

"We won't be long," Harry turned toward the goblin. "I just want to get a bit of gold and have a quick look around."

"Take your time," the goblin smiled. "I'll either stand and wait here for you or stand and wait for the next customer up top."

"Thanks," Harry gave a quick nod. "Come on Hermione."

The two friends walked into the vault and Hermione took a few minutes to look around, "is it just gold in here?"

"I don't know," Harry shrugged. "That's one of the things I was hoping to find out."

"Do you mind if I look around?" Hermione bit her lower lip.

"I was hoping you would," Harry smiled. "You've got better eyes than I do."

"Ok," Hermione smiled at the show of trust. It took a few minutes but Hermione found something, "over here Harry."

"What is it?" Harry walked over.

"Looks like some uncut gems," Hermione held the items up. "I haven't found anything but gold and these."

"Well . . . I guess we can't all have a vault filled with books," Harry shrugged.

"And who knows what's under all this gold," Hermione added. "You might have something interesting down there."

"Might be worth checking out some day," Harry nodded. "Let's go."

The ride back up top went much smoother than the ride down and within minutes, Harry was back with his men.

"Have a good trip sir?" Smythe gave a knowing smile.

"It was very informative," Harry nodded. "I just have to make a quick stop at one of the tellers and we're done here."

"Very good sir," Smythe nodded. "I'll have the men ready to move when you get done."

Hermione trailed behind as Harry marched to the teller, "excuse me."

"How may I help you?" The goblin leaned over the high counter.

"I need to get a list of the people that can access my account," Harry slid his key over to the goblin.

"One moment sir," the goblin's hands disappeared for a moment. "Will there be anything else?"

"Just a moment," Harry's eyes skimmed the list and his expression hardened. "Who put all these names on the list?"

"The only people who can put names on that list is yourself and," the goblin glanced at his desk. "Albus Dumbledore."

"I see," Harry nodded. "Is it possible to remove access for everyone on the list except for myself?"

"Yes," the goblin nodded. "Would you like me to do so?"

"I would," Harry nodded. "I don't want anyone to be able to get into my account except for me . . . and her."

"What?" Hermione's eyes widened.

"I trust you," Harry glanced over. "That puts you ahead of almost everyone on this list."

"One moment," the goblin made some notations on a parchment. "Do you need anything else?"

"Can I get a list of withdrawals and who performed them since my parent's death, I'd also like to know if there's more than one key."

"There is another key to your account," the goblin nodded. "Would you like it?"

"Yes," Harry nodded. "Do you have it?"

"It was returned to the bank after your parent's death," the goblin's hands disappeared again. "Here is your key and the statement of account use that you requested."

"Thank you," Harry went over the document and allowed himself to relax. "Is there any other account information that I should have?"

"Everything is in the documents I gave you," the goblin gave an odd smile. "It is good to see a wizard taking an interest in his finances, it gives me hope that the might not all be as stupid as one might think. Will there be anything else?"

"No," Harry shook his head. "Have a nice day."

"Why did you get so angry?" Hermione asked as they walked away from the counter. "I can understand not liking the fact that someone had access to your account but how do you know that your parents didn't give it to him?"

"I'm sure that my parents gave him access to the account," Harry nodded. "There is a date next to each name that tells when it was added to the list and his was put in before the death of my parents."

"And?"

"And after the death of my parents," Harry's jaw tightened. "It looks like he decided to add every member of the Order, I'm rather annoyed that he thought it would be a good idea to open my account up to so many people."

"Oh . . . they didn't take anything did they?" Hermione feared that she was about to witness her friend lose his temper.

"No," Harry shook his head. "At a guess, most of them didn't know that they could have gone in to my account and if they did then it doesn't look like they had access to the key . . . if they did then I can think of at least one of them I wouldn't trust with it."

"So nothing was taken?" Hermione perked up.

"No," Harry shook his head and handed her the spare key. "Keep this safe please."

"Are you sure you want to give this to me?" Hermione's eyes widened.

"Are you going to rob me?" Harry's face was impassive as he looked at her.

"No," Hermione shook her head. "Of course not."

"Are you going to give it to someone else or do something else of that nature?"

"No," Hermione was starting to become annoyed.

"I believe you," Harry nodded. "That's why I gave you that key, it's also why I gave you access to that account."

"Oh . . . thank you," Hermione's heart warmed at her friend's show of trust.

"Where to now sir?" Smythe grinned as he watched the exchange.

"Let's position the men and get something to eat," Harry replied. "I'm starving after all that."

"Very good sir," Smythe nodded.

Harry and his group walked out of the bank and Harry immediately noticed a group of three Aurors standing around the dead death eaters.

"Where do you want me to put the men sir?" Smythe prompted the young officer.

"Place the men in the locations that we discussed," Harry took another glance towards the location of their skirmish. "I suppose I'd better go talk to the Aurors before they start thinking."

"Wouldn't want them to hurt themselves," McLain chuckled. "I'll go with you if you don't mind sir."

"I'm coming too," Hermione added.

"Let's go," Harry nodded.

"Jones," Smythe watched Harry's group walk towards the Aurors. "The Major is a trusting sort . . . I'm not."

"I'll have the men pick their targets," Jones nodded. "You give the word and there won't be a man standing within a hundred feet of the CO."

"Now that's what I like to see in my NCOs," Smythe gave a satisfied nod. "Initiative."

|||||

"Something I can help you gentlemen with?" Harry kept his face impassive as he approached the group of Aurors.

"What are you doing here Potter?" One of the Aurors glared.

"Nothing important," Harry waved it off. "There some reason you haven't cleaned up yet?"

"We have yet to determine what has happened," He had been an Auror for five years and he wasn't going to let some snot nosed kid tell him what to do. "And we can't do anything with the bodies until we do."

"Is that all," Harry smiled. "They showed up and I had my men kill them . . . was there something else you needed?"

"You what?"

"Had my men kill them," Harry repeated himself. "Will that be all then?"

"Harry Potter," he could see the headlines. "I'm placing you under arrest for the murder of urk."

Without being prompted, McLain produced a wicked looking knife and held it against the Auror's throat. "Just give me the word sir."

"I don't think that will be necessary," Harry smiled. "I'm sure he didn't mean anything by that."

"There are three of us Potter," one of the other Aurors spoke up.

"And you'll all be dead the moment you even think about reaching for your wands," McLain sneered. "You even think about . . . "

"I said that won't be necessary," Harry's gave a calm smile. "I'm sure they just haven't heard about my new status . . . have you?"

The two Aurors became aware of several old men pointing odd looking spears at them and began to sweat nervously, "they won't be able to get here in time to help you potter."

"They don't have to get here to help me," Harry's smile widened. "They're already closer than they were to the death eaters . . . but I'm sure that this is all a misunderstanding."

"What kind of misunderstanding?" The first Auror was very aware of the blade against his throat.

"I'm guessing that you haven't been informed of the fact that I've been granted the authority to kill every death eater in England," Harry waved McLain off. "So the way I see it, you're all just victims of the bureaucratic process."

"That sounds right," the first Auror hand twitched. "Sorry for the trouble . . . Mr. Potter."

"Not a problem," Harry nodded. "Like I said, you're the victim here."

"Well . . . be about your business then." By unspoken agreement, the three Aurors decided that it was best to just go with the Potter boy's suggestions and leave things alone.

"Have a good day then," Harry offered his arm to Hermione. "Let's go to lunch . . . come on McLain, I'm buying."

"Right you are sir," McLain's knife disappeared.

AN: Well, here it is. It's a bit longer than my usual chapter length and I almost wrote more of this before I noticed the size, hope to have more of this and my other stuff out soon but who knows how the world will work. I thought about making Hermione the kind of girl that likes roller coaster rides but since she didn't like flying I decided she wouldn't like this either, look below for the omake. I could have gone with Dumbledore and half the order robbing Harry but I've seen that one done far too many times, I might use it in another fic that I'm thinking of writing at some point (My version of Harry gets a lawyer and asserts his independence) but not here.

Omake:

Hermione squealed as the cart began to pick up speed, "wahooo."

"Hermione?" Harry glanced at the girl.

"FASTER," Hermione threw up her arms. "Oh ho ho ho ho ho ho."

"I thought you hated this kind of thing?" Harry shuddered at the girl's crazed laugh. "You hated flying."

"Flying is nothing like this," Hermione laughed. "This is great, you were right when you said how great this was, oh ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho, thanks Harry."

"No problem?" Harry shuddered at the girl's crazed laugh again, maybe he was wrong when he thought that Hermione wouldn't be ruthless enough to fight death eaters . . . if watching Dudley's anime had taught him anything it was that a girl like that had little or no respect for human life . . . and a leather fetish . . . hmmmmmm maybe this wouldn't be such a bad thing after all.

The Potter Catch

"Hey Tom," Harry called out in greeting as his group entered the Leaky Cauldron.

"I've got your table ready over here," Tom ushered the group over to a large corner table.

"Could I get that table over there?" McLain waved his hand towards one of the other tables, "no offence sir but I expect Jones to come in soon and we usually talk about . . . well, let's just say that our conversations aren't fit for mixed company."

"If you want," Harry nodded. "But I want you to know that you're welcome to stay, I'd be happy to share a table with anyone of the men."

"I know sir," McLain refrained from mentioning the fact that his chosen table gave him a better view of the entrance and exit. "But I'd rather sit there all the same, thank you for the offer though."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "Be sure to put whatever they order on my bill Tom."

"Right you are Mr. Potter," Tom nodded.

"It's Harry to you Tom," Harry smiled. "Could you send out whatever you think I'd like? I trust your opinion."

"Same for me," Hermione nodded. "Thank you Tom."

"Right away," Tom nodded. "You'll have the best meal in the house."

"So," Hermione turned to Harry. "Who's the man in the grey suit?"

"I'll introduce you to him," Harry dodged the question. "I was planning to meet with him after this and I was hoping that you'd come along."

"Ok," Hermione nodded. "Could we visit my parents after that? I want to let them know where I'll be this summer."

"Ok," Harry nodded. "How has your summer been so far?"

"It's been ok," Hermione smiled. "I got some new books."

"And you've already read them," Harry chuckled. "I've got a couple that you might want to look through."

"Oh?" Hermione perked up, "you've been studying?"

"A little," Harry nodded. "But mostly for my new position."

"What books have you been reading?" Hermione leaned forward.

"Well," Harry tapped his chin. "Your grandfather's book, another called 'The Defence of Duffer's Drift,' and a few more that I haven't gotten to yet."

"Muggle books then?" Hermione nodded.

"Your grandfather's book has a few potions and charms," Harry smiled. "It's very interesting."

"Ok," Hermione began fidgeting. "About those death eaters."

"What about them?" Harry took her hand.

"Did you have to kill them?" Hermione avoided Harry's eye, "I'm not judging but . . . did they have to die? Some of them weren't much older then we are."

"If I hadn't then they could have been a danger to us later," Harry shrugged. "Say what you will about it, but I've just guaranteed that those death eaters can never hurt another person."

"I know but," Hermione bit her lower lip.

"It's perfectly natural to want to resolve things in a less violent manner," Harry assured his friend. "Society has spent years telling you that killing is wrong, and Hogwarts doesn't do much to contradict

that idea . . . like it or not, we are in a fight with a group that does not conform to social norms."

"Doesn't that make you just as bad as they are?" Hermione flinched, "I'm sorry Harry I didn't mean it like that."

"It's a valid question," Harry smiled. "People have been saying it for years, killing them will make you just as bad as they are."

"Well?" Hermione was afraid to hear the answer.

"It uses bad logic," Harry smiled. "Hanging around you must have done me a bit of good because I figured it out. Killing them does not make me just as bad as they are, similar maybe but not nearly as bad."

"You still haven't explained what you mean," Hermione began to relax.

"My men and I are better than they are for one simple reason," Harry smiled. "We do not target noncombatants. Death eaters kill children and muggles, my group protects children and muggles. If in my job of protecting innocents I'm called upon to kill a few death eaters." Harry shrugged.

"The ends justify the means?" Hermione blinked.

"Sometimes," Harry nodded.

"I guess I can accept that," Hermione nodded. "But why can't you use stunners? I know why your men can't but why can't you?"

"Every time a death eater gets hit by a stunner his friends revive him," Harry smiled. "It's harder to heal a missing arm. Most of the time, even if they don't suffer a lethal injury, the death eater is out of the fight and forced to endure a long recuperation."

"Oh," Hermione wilted.

"It isn't glamorous," Harry sighed. "I have to consider the best way to hurt Voldemort, and if I remove his followers . . . make it so they can't be broken out of some prison."

"It hurts Voldemort," Hermione's shoulders slumped. "And the best way to do that is by killing people."

"Best way I can think of," Harry nodded.

"Oh," Hermione looked down at the table. "Let's talk about something else."

"Ok," Harry licked his lips. "What do you want to talk about?"

"Are you planning to go back to school?" Hermione made a weak attempt to smile.

"No," Harry shook his head. "Even without taking my responsibilities into account I'm not going to do anything that'll give Dumbledore any control over my life."

"But why?" Hermione's voice showed her distress, "it's important to get a good education."

"I'll continue my education if I can," Harry smiled. "But I won't have anymore to do with Dumbledore."

"Is this because of your fight?" Hermione frowned.

"He said I was going dark because I killed a few death eaters," Harry's hands clinched. "He said that they'd never get a chance to redeem themselves, he compared me to Voldemort . . . said that I reminded him of the bastard."

"Is it really that bad between you and Dumbledore?" Hermione winced, "I mean, couldn't you put these things behind you? School is important."

"He was quite clear what he meant," Harry's frown deepened. "I'm sure he was just using it as emotional blackmail but . . ."

"But he crossed the line," Hermione decided to give up this argument. "He shouldn't have done that."

"Yes," Harry's shoulders dropped. "And when you couple that with what I learned at the bank . . ."

"You're right Harry," Hermione whispered. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry," Harry noticed Tom approaching with the food. "But I think we should change the subject again . . . we've run another into the ground."

"Yeah," Hermione agreed. "What should we talk about now?"

"Here you are," Tom placed a candle on the table between them. "Thought you might need a bit more light over here, enjoy your meal."

"Thank you Tom," Hermione smiled.

"Yeah thanks," Harry nodded.

"Are you planning to recruit more people into your unit?" Hermione smiled, "I couldn't think of another safe subject."

"Probably," Harry nodded. "They want the men to train new officers . . . don't have any plans to start recruitment but I'm sure I'll need to at some point."

"Oh," Hermione slouched. "To replace the people that get . . . lost?"

"To bring things up to full strength," Harry chuckled. "On paper, I'm allowed to have many times the amount of men I do now."

"Really," Hermione perked up a bit. "Why do you have less men then you're supposed to?"

"One reason is that there aren't too many old timers to recruit," Harry yawned. "They don't make up a large percent of the retired population."

Another reason is that I'm already stretched to my limits with what I've got, I need a bit of time to get things together before I expand."

"Can I help?" Hermione blinked.

"I hope so," Harry smirked. "I'm used to having you around to do my thinking."

"You're not dumb," Hermione glared. "You may be lazy and unmotivated but you're not dumb."

"It was supposed to be a joke," Harry shook his head.

"Well it wasn't funny," Hermione picked at her food.

"Sorry," Harry shrugged. "And it looks like I killed another subject . . . how about we talk about." Harry's eyes glazed as he tried to think of a safe subject, "I don't know . . . your vault. How do you plan to get through all those books if you don't have regular access to Diagon alley? And are you planning to take the books to your house?"

"I was hoping that I could come here with you," Hermione smiled sheepishly. "My parents don't want me coming here alone, they're afraid of death eater attacks. I was planning to bring my books home . . . why?"

"Because I don't think it's a good idea," Harry took a sip of his drink. "It would make your family a bigger target."

"What do you mean?" Hermione leaned forward.

"Those books contain spells that haven't been used for years," Harry looked his friend in the eye. "Even if they didn't have anything useful to Voldemort, they're still valuable."

"But the Order is watching over my house," Hermione protested. "They'll . . ."

Harry's snort of disgust interrupted Hermione's musings, "and they've shown time and time again how much they can be trusted. No one

under the protection of the vaunted Order will ever get hurt now will they?"

"You've proved your point," Hermione scowled. "You didn't have to be so snarky about it."

"I was to insult them not you," Harry shrugged. "You know they've still been following me? Even though I told them all to shove off."

"I'm not surprised," Hermione smiled. "You are Harry Potter after all."

"Yes but my point was that I knew that they were still following me," Harry's smile turned menacing. "They weren't good enough to hide themselves from my men. Using magic, some of the Order's best couldn't hide themselves from us . . . puts a whole new spin on their competence now doesn't it?"

"Fine," Hermione frowned. "I won't take my books home . . . I'm starting to wonder if I should go home, and I guess my parents can go overseas for a while."

"Why do you say that?"

"Harry, you've spent the last few minutes convincing me that the Order can't be trusted with something as important as picking up my dry cleaning . . . why do you think I'd let them watch my parents?" Hermione bit her lower lip, "what if they have another traitor?"

"I'll see if I can spare a few men to watch over your house," Harry smiled. "At least until we can figure out how to deal with things . . . you shouldn't have to be away from your family all summer and your parents shouldn't have to leave their home."

"Excellent idea sir," Smythe had walked into the room and joined the conversation. He was always in favor of keeping his family safe, "the men are in position and I took the liberty of putting a couple sharpshooters on the rooftops."

"Good," Harry nodded. "Could you contact our friend in the grey suit and get us an appointment?"

"Yes sir," Smythe nodded. "Anything else?"

"Have you eaten yet?" Harry scratched his chin, "and for that matter has anyone eaten yet?"

"I haven't," Smythe shook his head. "And I've already got something set up for the men."

"Get something to eat," Harry glanced around the room. "After that, Hermione wants to go see her parents."

"Right you are," Smythe nodded. "I'll just go join McLain."

"Not going to sit with us?" Hermione asked.

"I've got a few things I need to discuss with McLain," Smythe patted his granddaughter on the head. "I'd love to keep company with you but duty calls."

"Ok," Hermione nodded. "So long as you're not ducking out on me."

"I'd never do that," less it was for your own good. Smythe added the last part in his mind, "sides . . . I won't be more then a few feet away."

"Ok," Hermione smiled up at her grandfather.

Smythe gave his granddaughter another fond pat on the head before walking over to join his friend.

"Well?" Smythe sat down.

"Good situational awareness," McLain answered quickly. "He's always looking around, looks as if he's been in bad places before."

"Bad family life," Smythe replied. "Anything else?"

"He needs to learn how to carry himself," McLain stopped to watch as two men walked through the front door. "I think it'd be helpful if he'd learn to use that new sword of his."

"Couple of the boys were in Cavalry units," Smythe nodded. "But I think you'd be a good first teacher."

"Thought you wanted him to be a proper gentleman?" McLain raised an eyebrow.

"I want him to be alive," Smythe countered. "Sides, if he knifes the witnesses then who's to say that he didn't win the fight the fair way?"

"Makes no difference to me," McLain shrugged. "So long as he does everything else like a gentleman then I don't see why he can't fight dirty."

"We're going to make a quick stop at my granddaughter's house after this," Smythe waved Tom over.

"Things are going well then?" McLain smirked.

"They already knew each other," Smythe replied. "I'll have whatever the special is."

"I'll have it out soon," Tom nodded.

IIIIIIII

"We have a situation," Dumbledore looked around the room. "Harry no longer trusts me and . . . and I fear that he has recruited a group of men who have killed several people on Harry's orders."

The Order gasped, "you can't be serious." Molly looked to be close to tears, "Harry?"

"Tell them the rest of it," Moody scowled. "Tell them that the dead men were only death eaters."

"They're still people," Dumbledore frowned. "And as such they deserved a chance to be redeemed . . . Harry has denied them that right."

"And they've denied that right to several innocent people," Moody's eyes narrowed. "Or are innocent people not worth saving?"

"Of course they're worth saving," Dumbledore protested. "But just because Harry was saving people doesn't mean he has the right to kill others."

"Is that what you really think Albus?" Minerva frowned, "are you willing to sacrifice us in the hope that one of our killers might someday repent?"

"That's not what I said," Dumbledore frowned.

"Yes it is," Moody gave an evil leer. "You don't give a damn about any of the victims because you're too wrapped up with the thought of saving their murders."

"What do you think about what Harry's become?" Albus made a vain attempt to change the subject.

"Potter scares me," Moody admitted with a frown. "I saw what happened when he decided to take action, he's one of the most ruthless bastards I've ever met."

"How dare you say that about Harry," Molly looked to be working herself into a rage. "Why that boy . . ."

"Is a killer," Moody interrupted. "If he were on the other side he'd make the Lestranges look like insolent school children, he's not dark. It's just . . . just something in his nature, only about ten percent of all Aurors are willing to use lethal curses on their enemies among those ten percent about two percent never feel any regret."

"You said that he'd be worse than the Lestranges?" Dumbledore was beginning to regret some of the choices he'd made, "in what way."

"Not worse," Moody shook his head. "They kill for fun, they like to draw it out and if they want you dead they're likely to take their time doing it. Harry, if he wanted you dead he'd do it. He wouldn't play around he wouldn't waste his time or put it off he'd just kill you."

"What do you think made him this way?" Dumbledore was afraid of the answer.

"When most people grow up, they're taught to respect their fellow man, never learned that killing was wrong.." Moody glanced around the room, "Harry never learned that and it's too late to teach him."

Dumbledore closed his eyes in shame, he'd created another monster and set it upon the wizarding world.

"Wipe that look off your face Albus," Moody barked. "I know you and I know that you're not as lily white as you like to pretend."

"You just said Harry was a killer," Dumbledore shook his head. "What am I supposed to think?"

"I said that he could kill without remorse," Moody replied. "Without any emotion, he's what you made him and I'm not going to stay with you if you're set on standing against him. He's not a threat unless you insist on making him a threat. Voldemort and his lot are a pack of rabid dogs, Harry and his are nothing like that."

"I . . ."

"Mucked things up royally? Stuck your foot down your throat?" Moody nodded. "What about me? I'm in that ten percent, I've killed my share of them so does that make me the next dark lord?"

"You're an Auror," Albus knew that he had to regain control of this conversation. "It's your job to fight this war."

"Aye," Moody nodded. "It is, I volunteered for this. I had to go through several steps before I was thrown to the wolves. On the other hand, Harry was forced into this life. I had some happy memories to fall back on when things got tough . . . what does Harry have? What happy memories did you allow him? Does anyone know what brings the boy joy in the dark hours of the night?"

"He said that his happiest memories were getting his Hogwarts letter and the thought that he could live with Sirius," Remus spoke up. "He didn't have much else . . . why did you do this to him Albus? Why did you have to put Harry with those people."

"It was for the greater good," Dumbledore protested. "I did what was best for the boy."

"A house without love is not what's best for him," Molly looked ready to burst into tears. "Oh Albus what have you done."

"He needed to be protected," Dumbledore raised his voice. "He needed to be kept safe, I kept him safe. He wouldn't have gotten that safety with another family."

"I remember what you told me that night," Minerva's jaw was clenched. "And to my eternal shame I allowed you to place him with those people . . . I may never forgive myself for that."

"I don't see what all this fuss is about," Snape sneered. "It's obvious that this is all because of the way the boy was coddled, he's an arrogant little brat just like his father."

"Severus please," Albus was relieved that the room had shifted its attention to the greasy potions master. "That sort of talk doesn't help . . . what we need is a way to regain Harry's trust."

"Just grab the boy and bring him here," Snape gave a nasty smile. "A few months here without any of the usual opportunities to get into trouble will do the brat a world of good."

"Good luck," Tonks rubbed her neck. "I was following him under an invisibility cloak and they still detected me."

"Clumsy oaf," Snape snapped.

"I didn't stumble," Tonks fingered her wand. "They caught on another way."

"I still don't understand why Albus allows you to come to these meetings," Snape wouldn't let things go. "You're a useless snot, no better than your mother or your mud blood father."

"One more word," Tonks growled.

"Severus please," Dumbledore gave Hogwart's most biased professor a look of disappointment. "We don't need that sort of language in this Order. And you aren't helping things with your attitude Nymphadora, both of you stop acting like children."

"If he says another word about my parents then I'm going to hex him into a bloody puddle," Tonks refused to take her eyes off Snape. "I won't ask for an apology, I won't give any warning, and I won't hesitate."

"And I'll help you," Moody gave Dumbledore a warning glance.

"So will I," Shacklebolt promised.

"People please," Dumbledore felt his control slipping again. "Calm down."

"I'm not going to allow him to be such an ass anymore," Tonks's glare refused to let up. "If he wants to remain uninjured then he's going to have to learn some manners."

"I see now that it is impossible to return this meeting to its agenda," Dumbledore gave a disappointed sigh. "So I call this meeting to a close. Come along Severus, I have some things that I'd like to discuss with you."

"Bastard," Tonks watched as the Headmaster and his pet Potions Master left the room.

"Which one?" Moody took Tonks by the elbow and led her out of the room, "I'm gonna need to borrow her for a moment Shack."

"No problem Mad Eye," the black Auror shrugged.

"What do you need Moody?" Tonks ground her teeth.

"Not till we're out of the room," Moody dragged her into the hall and to an unused room. Casting several privacy charms, Moody took a second to admire his work before turning back to the young Auror.

"What do you want Moody?"

"First off," Moody gave an evil looking smile. "I'm proud of the way you stood up to the two of them. Shows that you've got the makings to be a great Auror some day, the best of us should be able to stare down anyone . . . no matter who they are."

"Thanks," Tonks blinked. This was not what she expected, "what else can I do for you?"

"You said that Potter's men spotted you under your invisibility cloak?" Moody turned serious, "how?"

"They said that they smelled my perfume," Tonks frowned.

"Didn't they tell you not to wear that at the academy?" Moody asked quietly.

"No," Tonks shook her head. "But I don't wear it anyway . . . it always makes me sneeze."

"Must have been your soap then," Moody sighed. "Did you see them use any magic?"

"No," Tonks shook her head. "But one of them knew my muggle grandfather if that helps."

"Aye," Moody nodded. "It may . . . I know these men, I can't remember where I know them from but I know these men."

"One of them was named McLain," Tonks suggested.

"Did he have an ugly looking knife with him?" Moody's eyes widened.

"Yeah," Tonks rubbed her neck. "Why?"

"I thought he was dead," Moody shook his head. "It does explain a few things though, though I do wonder where Harry was able to find them."

"What is it?" Tonks smiled.

"See if you can set up a meeting with Potter," Moody glanced around. "Tell no one and make sure he knows that it's me requesting this meeting."

"Why?" Tonks bit her lower lip, "why me?"

"He likes you," Moody shrugged. "And you're female, most of his men will be reluctant to kill you for that reason."

"What?" Tonk's eyes widened, "kill me?"

"I wouldn't have sent you if I thought you'd be in any danger," Moody smiled. "I might be but I doubt you will . . . less you make a move towards Harry with McLain around, watch that one."

"Ok," Tonks nodded. "But why me?"

"And don't try to sneak up or anything," Moody ignored the question. "Be as obvious as you can, just walk up to the front doors and ask for Harry. Wait for him to get back if he's out."

"Ok," Tonks licked her lips. "I'll do it."

"Good," Moody smiled. "Good luck."

IIIIIIII

"Nervous?" Hermione asked as the car pulled up to her house.

"Why would I be?" Harry smiled, "we're just coming to talk."

"We're coming to tell them that it's not safe and that it would be better if I stayed with you," Hermione made no move to open her door. "I'm worried that they might decide that they have to protect me."

"Don't worry about it," Harry opened his door and motioned for her to do the same. "I'm not going to."

"Your parents may surprise you," Smythe nodded. "All else fails then I'll talk to them, I don't think it'll be necessary but I promise that I'll talk to them if need be."

"Hey hon," Hermione's father greeted her at the door. "Did you have a good time?"

"I need to talk to you and mum," Hermione replied seriously. "It's important."

"Alright hon," the man replied with a smile on his face. Inside he had gone cold, if that Potter kid had knocked up his baby then . . . then he was going to find out why dentists were universally feared.

"Have a seat sweetie." Hermione's mother motioned towards a chair, "and tell us what you're so worked up about."

"You know about how things are heating up?" Hermione's eyes searched her parent's faces, "I'm worried about you. I'm afraid that someone is going to try to kill you."

"Why?"

"Because of me," Harry entered the conversation.

"Not just because of you," Hermione said quickly. "It's also because I'm muggle born, they can't stand the fact that I'm allowed to go to school or have basic rights."

"I imagine that the fact that you're at the top of your class would annoy them to wouldn't it?" Hermione's mother smirked. "Get to the point hon."

"I want you to move," Hermione said quickly.

"Move?" Hermione's mother raised an eyebrow.

"Yes." Hermione nodded, "I want you to go somewhere safe."

"Why should we leave our house?" Hermione's father growled, "why can't the Magical Police protect us?"

"Because they're controlled by a bunch of idiots that are either too afraid to do anything to anger the other side or are sympathetic with the other side." Harry spoke sharply. "I wouldn't trust them with the security for a garbage dump. If you really have to stay then I'd be willing to set up as many protections as I can arrange."

"With the Ministry being as corrupt as they are," Smythe spoke for the first time. "I wouldn't be surprised if they knew where you lived . . . might be a good idea to switch houses at the very least."

"We'll think about it," Hermione's mother said firmly. "Now if you boys will excuse me, I'd like to have a private conversation with my daughter."

"All I ask is that you think about it." Smythe nodded, "I need to go take care of something Major." Smythe said to Harry, "I'll be back in a flash."

"Ok." Harry nodded.

"Come with me lad." Hermione's father took Harry by the arm, "and let's leave these girls alone to their talk."

"Ok Mr. Granger," Harry agreed.

"Call me Dan." The man grinned, "we'll be back soon hon. Have fun with your talk Jane."

"So tell me." Jane asked her daughter, "how long have the two of you been dating?"

"We're not dating mum," Hermione replied with a blush. "We just have an arrangement."

"An arrangement?" Jane asked flatly.

"Yeah," Hermione agreed with a mischievous grin. "He asked me to be his date to parties and I agreed to protect him from all those other nasty girls."

"What?" Jane blinked, this wasn't going the way she had thought it would.

"He's afraid of fan girls." Hermione giggled, "he thinks having me around will protect him from the worst of them."

"And you're ok with this dear?"

"He's my best friend." Hermione nodded, "we talked things out and agreed that anything serious would wait until later."

"Your father will be relieved to hear that," Jane said with a grin. "Did you see the look on his face when you said you had to talk to us?"

"What was that all about?"

"He was afraid that you were going to tell him that you were going to make us grandparents." Jane giggled, "and he was imagining what he was going to do to Harry after he tricked the poor boy into his dentist's chair."

"Mum." Hermione was scandalized.

"Well he doesn't get to see you all that often," Jane explained. "He worries that some boy is going to move in while he's not around to protect you."

IIIIIIII

"Why are you in that uniform lad?" Dan asked in a deceptively mild tone of voice.

"I joined the army," Harry replied. "Me and the old timers are going to make the country safe again."

"You sure you know what you're getting into?" Dan sighed, "it's not an easy thing to kill a man."

"Sure it is," Harry disagreed. "All it takes is four pounds of pressure on the trigger, it's too easy."

"You'll learn lad." Dan shrugged, "hardest thing I had to learn as a dentist was to cause pain without flinching when the patient screamed."

"I already learned." By its own violation, Harry's hand dropped to caress the butt of his Webley.

"What happened?"

"Lots of things," Harry said. Jerking his hand off the pistol as if it were red hot. "Most recently I had to kill some of them."

"I'm sorry it had to happen to you so young then," said Dan. The man's lips pursed as he tried to think of something to add that would make the situation get better.

"I'm not," Harry replied with a half grin. "Those are a few death eaters that won't ever hurt anyone again, I can't bring myself to feel emotional about a group of people that want to kill me and everyone I've ever cared about."

"Well," Dan said changing the subject. "It's good to see that Hermione carried on the tradition of dating military men, it's how I met her mother and how her grandmother met her grandfather and so on."

"You were in the army?" Harry asked with an odd look on his face.

"Even the army needs Dentists and I had a lot of fun while it lasted." The older man grinned at the memory and his shoulders straightened

as he relived the memories. "Then I did the dumbest thing I've ever done in my life."

"What?" Harry was beginning to enjoy the story.

"I volunteered for jump school. To be honest, I begged to be allowed to go to Jump school. I thought it would impress Jane's family." He laughed at the memory. "Nearly pissed myself every time I had to walk to the door and broke both legs on the last jump . . . never would have had to do it again and I had to break both legs on the last time I'd ever do it. Well, to make a long story short. I got out of the army because of my injuries and started a private practice with my wife."

"I might be able to arrange for those injuries to get healed," Harry said cautiously. "If they're still bothering you."

"I'll think about it." Dan nodded, "they don't bother me much and the only reason the army let me go was because it made it difficult to run. Never ran much in uniform and I never run much now, I'm a dentist not a combat troop."

"Would you be willing to look at my men?" Harry asked slowly. "I don't know what kind of medical care they've had and to be quite frank, some of them have some pretty bad teeth."

"Don't want to try the magical approach then?"

"I was hoping to use both. I don't know anything about dentistry or healing magic, but it seems to me that there are some things that one could do that the other could not."

"Glad that you're more sensible than most magical folk then," Dan told Harry with a grin. "Most of them treat us with confused contempt at best."

"It might be because I was raised without knowing about magic," Harry offered.

"Could be lad," Dan agreed. "Or it could be that you've got a bit of sense, something I haven't seen much in my dealings with the magic world. So why don't you tell me what you think of my daughter?"

"She's one of the smartest people I've ever met," Harry replied honestly. "She's a good friend, I'm lucky to know her."

"Good to hear." Dan smiled with fatherly pride, "why don't we go see if the girls are ready for us to come back?"

"Ok," Harry agreed with a shrug.

The two men returned to the sitting room to find the girls giggling over tea and swapping embarrassing stories.

"Maybe we should have stayed away a little longer eh Harry?" Dan asked with a grin, "least then we wouldn't have to stand around and take this."

"Did you really swallow one of the little flying balls . . . "

"snitch mum," Hermione.

"Yes a snitch, to end one of your games?" Jane asked with an incredulous grin.

"Yeah." Harry nodded, "Hermione told you that huh? They've named it the Potter catch in the newest edition of Quiddich Through the Ages"

"You can get her back with a few stories of your own lad," Dan prompted.

"Don't you dare," Hermione shouted before Harry had a chance to speak. "Harry's much too sweet to do something like that if he knows what's good for him."

"Best do as she says." Dan slapped Harry on the back, "that's the same tone her mother uses when she's serious."

"If you say so," Harry said. He was still a bit out of his depth in this conversation.

"Got your meeting set up Major," Smythe said as he entered the room with suspiciously good timing.

"Did you want to attend this one Hermione?" Harry asked his friend with a raised eyebrow.

"Yes I did." Hermione nodded. "See you later mum, dad."

AN: Yes it is Ragnuuk, he's a branch manager and I look at him as being lower level Ragnok who is a different Goblin, sorry for the confusion. People have wondered about my choices in firearms, I'm using old things because these are old men and they are comfortable with using what they know. There is also the fact that there have been very few real advances in the last hundred years, I could say Harry hosed down a group of death eaters with an MP-5 10 or an MP-5N but what would be the point.

Hello Cousin

"So who is this man in the grey suit?" Hermione asked as the trio walked towards Smythe's car.

"Interesting guy," Harry said conversationally. "He can go from unimportant bureaucrat to your best friend in the blink of an eye, I thought he was doing magic when I caught on."

"He's a bloody spook darling," Smythe explained. "Works for one of the alphabet soup and probably can't even tell himself what he does."

"Oh," Hermione said in surprise. "Who else are we meeting?"

"The Ministry face to the muggle world, woman by the name of Daphne Blake." Smythe replied, "and some army brass."

"Could you teach me to use a pistol like Harry's?" Hermione's brain switched gears.

"Hermione?" Harry said in shock.

"Sure can hon," Smythe agreed. "Might be best to start you off on something a bit smaller than Harry's though, not sure your hands are big enough to handle his Webley."

"Ok," Hermione agreed with a smile. "How about a PPK like James bond has?"

"How about something British," Smythe retorted. "Like a Royal Irish Constabulary?"

"Is that in your book?" Hermione asked quickly, "Harry said that he'll loan me his copy and I can't wait to read it."

"Told you about my book did he?" Smythe said with a grin.

"Yes I did," Harry interjected. "And I was hoping to get it reprinted for the new men."

"Might think about expanding it too," Smythe added. "Make it a manual for new officers and men or some such. Sections on how to care for and wear your uniform, or some basics on using the sword."

"Good idea," Harry agreed. "A book on everything you need to know to be in my unit. Would it be possible to make it self updating?"

"Should be," Hermione said with a grin. "Can I have a copy of that book too?"

"Course you can hon," Smythe agreed.

The car pulled up to the government building and Smythe turned to look at his passengers. "You two go ahead while I find a parking space."

"Ok grandpa," Hermione agreed.

"Let's go." Harry stepped out and held the door open for his friend.

"Thank you Harry," Hermione said with a grateful smile. "Where are we going?"

"Follow me," Harry said. The two friends walked through the front entrance and past the curious receptionist to an unmarked door. "After you," Harry said after opening the door.

"Such a gentleman." Hermione giggled.

"I agree," a voice on the other side of the door agreed. "A good catch to be sure."

"Who are you?" Hermione asked, embarrassed at being heard.

"Daphne Blake," the woman replied. "Officially the Ministry's representative to the muggle government, unofficially I've spent more time doing that job in the last two days than I have in the rest of my career. The magical government doesn't like me or my non magical colleagues to get any information."

"Couldn't you just go to diagon alley?" Hermione asked quietly.

"Until now I didn't see the need to," Daphne confessed. "I have other duties that take up most of my time and I seldom give a thought to the magical world, what would be the point?"

"But . . ." Hermione's jaw worked as she tried to find a reply.

"I think you'll find that the bigotry you encounter at Hogwarts is just a pale shadow of what's waiting in the world," Daphne said sadly. "You'll find that all the jobs go to pure bloods and they'll say that it wouldn't really be fair to give one to a muggle born because they can survive in both worlds, pure bloods can't be expected to leave the only world they've ever known can they? You'll go to another school to learn how to live in your own world and you'll catch up on all the schooling that you missed out on by attending Hogwarts and life will move on, if you're lucky you'll get a letter or two a year from one of your old friends and you'll get on with your life."

"No one stays in the magical world?" Hermione asked in horrified shock.

"Some do," Daphne allowed. "Not many, mostly those that married a pure blood with the occational rare case of a student being so brilliant that they're recruited by one of the research companies or Gringotts."

"That's terrible," Hermione said in outrage.

"That's life," Daphne replied with a shrug.

"Do you keep track of all the muggle borns that leave the magic world?" Harry asked quietly.

"Some of them," Daphne agreed. "Why?"

"Ask them to come in for a meeting," Harry ordered. "I have an idea."

"What are you planning?" Hermione asked quickly.

"I'm thinking that it might be useful to have a lot of fully trained magic users on my side," Harry replied. "If all else fails then they deserve to know about Voldemort's return so they have a better chance to look after themselves."

"The wizarding world won't like you bringing all the muggle born students back," Daphne cautioned.

"Then it'll have to change or be destroyed," Harry replied. "And if they choose destruction then we'll just have to start over and build something new."

"Harry," Hermione said happily.

"I believe you," Daphne said after a moment of thought. "And I'll help you do it if you like."

"Thank you," Harry replied with a smile.

The door opened to admit the man in the grey suit and General Montblanc from the previous meeting.

"Who is your young friend Major?" The man in the grey suit regarded Hermione with undisguised curiosity.

"That's my friend Hermione," Harry replied. "Sergeant Major Smythe's great granddaughter and one of the people that might be able to answer some of your questions."

"Really?" The man in the grey suit asked with a smile, "may I steal her for a short time?"

Harry glanced over at Hermione and raised an eyebrow.

"Why don't we go to this corner over here to talk," Hermione suggested. "I don't know how much help I'll be but I'll do what I can."

"Thank you," the man replied quickly. "That is all I can ask for."

"While they're talking, can you spare a moment of your time to have a short chat with me before the meeting Major?" The General asked Harry quietly.

"Sure," Harry agreed. "What can I do for you?"

"I was hoping that you could make a place in your unit for a man I know," the General explained. "Good man, ten years in the Special Air Service, all the right qualifications, a career man one of the best soldiers I've had the pleasure to command."

"And?" Harry prompted.

"And he lost both his legs in an accident," the General came to the point. "I was hoping that you might have room for a clerk or a quartermaster. He can't walk but he can still think, the Army's his life and it would kill him to get pensioned off."

"I'm sure I can use him," Harry agreed quickly. "And I might be able to do something about his legs, no promises though."

"Thank you Major," the General said in relief. "I knew I could count on your help. If you don't mind my asking about how you might help with his legs?"

"Magic," Harry said with a shrug. "I don't know if it'll help but I'm willing to find out. Saw one man with a peg leg and he didn't have any difficulty, might have been charmed to be easier to use. "

"A peg leg?" The General asked in shock, "medical replacements have come a long way since the use of peg legs. Do you think it would be possible to combine our technology with your magic?"

"Again, I'm not sure." Harry replied, "but I hope so."

"Thank you again Major." The General clapped the young officer on the shoulder. "For all you've done."

"Happy to help," Harry replied."

Across the room, Hermione was having her conversation with the man in the grey suit.

"Thank you for agreeing to talk to me Ms. Granger," the man in a rumpled grey suit greeted the young witch.

"You must be the man in the grey suit that Harry told me about," Hermione said with a smile.

"Guilty," the man said with a friendly grin. "Your friend Harry mentioned that you would be able to answer quite a few of my questions."

"Maybe," Hermione agreed.

"Would you be willing to research the answers that you do not know?" The man continued, "I would of course be willing to pay you for your time and I would also be willing to include research costs."

"Research costs?" Hermione asked.

"Money for new books," the man explained. "Quite a bit of money for new books so long as you are willing to forward me your receipt."

"Why?" Hermione's eyes narrowed in suspicion.

"Because I am not without resources in your world," the man said quickly. "They are not nearly as substantial as I would like but they do exist and they have told me a bit about you, top of your year, considered the most brilliant student to grace the halls of the school in recent memory."

"And?" Hermione prompted.

"And I have come to the conclusion that your position with Harry is similar to my position in the government," the man replied. "You find the answers for questions. I have quite a few questions about the wizarding world and it only makes sense to go to the established expert."

"What are your resources in the wizarding world?" Hermione demanded.

"I really don't think that . . ."

"I need to know what they are so I know what to focus my time on," Hermione explained.

"I see . . . my twelve year old niece just completed her first year." The man said with a frown, "and I am dependent on what I have been able to gather from my conversations with her."

"And you phrased it the way you did before so I'd think that you knew more then you did," Hermione said with a nod.

"That is your first lesson Ms. Granger," the man said with a proud smile. "Never let them know how much knowledge you have, allow them to think that you know more then you do or allow them to think that you know less but never let them know how much you do."

"Can you get me a list of what you want to know?" Hermione asked with a smile.

"That and more," the man agreed. "Harry works for the General over there, I'd like you to work for me."

"Oh?"

"Good answer," the man said with a grin. "It would make most people feel obligated to give you more information. I want you to be my representative with young Major Potter, I would like you to give me information about your world and give him the information that I manage to gather."

"I can do that," Hermione agreed slowly.

"Next we have to determine if you want to be an independent contractor or a member of my . . . organization," the man continued. "At the present time I'd rather you keep your independence, I think it would make things easier all around."

"I want credentials," Hermione demanded. "I need to be able to do things that normal people aren't aloud to do."

"Like carry a pistol?" The man asked with a raised eyebrow. "That will not be a problem, I should be able to get something delivered later today. Anything else?"

"I think we hit the main points," Hermione replied. "We'll work out the details like pay later."

"It was a pleasure meeting you and I think that it will be an even larger pleasure to work with you Ms. Granger," the man said with a smile.

"Likewise," Hermione agreed.

"Looks like it's about time for the meeting to start," the man in the grey suit said. "Why don't we take our places."

"Lets." Hermione walked over to the table and took a seat next to Harry and waited for the meeting to begin.

"What can we do for you Major?" The man in the grey suit opened the meeting.

"I've taken a couple prisoners," Harry replied. "And I also have an agreement for a secure detention facility to keep them in if you give your approval."

"Secure detention facility?" The man in the grey suit asked.

"Gringotts has agreed to provide guards and upkeep for a modest fee," Harry explained. "I think it would be a good idea to take them up on their offer."

"Wouldn't it be difficult to get people in and out of the bank without being noticed?" Daphne asked.

"They have a new form of magical transportation," Hermione spoke up. "It allows two doors to be connected, in effect you would go through a door here and come out in the bank."

"That could be very useful," the General agreed. "I'll second your recommendation to enter into an agreement with the bank."

"Seconded," Daphne pitched in.

"Carried," the man in the grey suit nodded. "Can you see to it Major?"

"Yes I can," Harry replied. "Another thing I thought I'd mention is truth potions."

"Go on," the man in the grey suit asked. "Tell me about them."

"A few drops of the more powerful potions will prevent a person from being able to tell a lie," Harry said with a shrug. "I think that they might also be able compel answers from unwilling subjects."

"Can you get a supply of this potion?" The man in the grey suit demanded.

"Not at the moment," Harry said. "But I'm working on something with Ms. Blake that might solve that problem."

"Can we see about increasing his budget?" The man in the grey suit turned to the General, "the more I learn the more I want."

"I'll see what I can do," the General agreed. "So long as you match it with your discretionary funds."

"Done," the man agreed quickly.

"The last thing I wanted to bring up is that I am going to need more space," Harry said with a smile. "The regimental building is doing for now but I'm going to need more room."

"There are a few closed bases we might be able to give you," the General suggested. "Nothing large but I think you'll be able to find one that'll meet your needs, I'll send you a list."

"Thank you," Harry replied.

"I think that all of us will be sending you quite a large number of lists," the man in the grey suit said with a laugh. "Is there anything else we can do for you Major?"

"I don't have anyone to interrogate the prisoners," Harry replied quickly. "None of my men are trained with the latest techniques and very few of them have any experience in making people talk."

The man in the grey suit and the General shared a look. "Why don't we both provide a few people," the General suggested.

"Excellent idea," the man in the grey suit enthused. "I don't have anything else, does anyone else have anything to add?" He glanced around the room, "then I suggest that we adjourn for now."

Everyone stood up and made their way out of the room, Harry and Hermione walked out the door that they'd entered and found Smythe waiting for them.

"One of the tame bobbies decided to have a talk with me," Smythe explained. "Didn't like the fact that I had a suspicious bulge under my coat and didn't believe me when I said I was active army."

"What did you do?" Hermione asked sympathetically.

"Took his gun away and marched him in here," Smythe replied. "Called the General's dog's body and had him straighten everything out."

"Took his gun away?" Hermione asked incredulously.

"Poor kid didn't even know how to use the bloody thing," Smythe agreed. "Would've gone to the meeting anyway but I got caught up

teaching a class in proper handling of firearms and lost track of the time, sorry about that sir."

"Don't worry about it," Harry said dismissively. "Might even be a good idea to offer to give the security around here a few more classes."

"Won't be necessary sir," Smythe replied. "Security in the building knows what they're doing it's the men on the outside, metro cops and carrying for the first time in their lives."

"The regular police have guns?" Hermione said in shock.

"Just in this area and as a temporary measure," Smythe confirmed. "On account of all the terrorist attacks."

"Voldemort?" Harry asked.

"Probably," Smythe confirmed.

"The General had a man he wanted me to take," Harry said. "Guy lost his legs and the General was hoping that we'd have a spot as a clerk or a supply sergeant."

"What did you tell him sir?"

"Told him that I could probably use a man like that," Harry continued. "And that we might be able to enchant the prosthetics he's got to return him to a hundred percent."

"That could work," Smythe allowed. "And it would give us another pool of experienced men to recruit. Should I put the word out?"

"Yeah," Harry said. "I think that would be a good idea."

IIIIIIII

Tonks walked up to the front doors of the Regimental Association Building and knocked on the door.

"Yes?" An old man in a uniform like the one Harry had been wearing opened the door, "what can I do for you young lady?"

"Is Harry here?" Tonks asked with an innocent smile.

"I can neither confirm or deny the presence of Major Potter," the old man answered coldly.

"I need to meet with him," Tonks said. "I'm an Auror and I'm also a friend of his."

"Really?" The old man asked flatly, "wait here."

"Ok," Tonks agreed.

The old man disappeared for a few minutes and returned with a slightly younger man with cold eyes.

"Why are you here?" The second man asked, "and what's your name?"

"I'm here to set up a meeting with Harry," Tonks replied. "Haven't we met before? What's your name?"

"The name's McLain and it looks like you still haven't changed your perfume."

"McLain?" Tonks asked nervously. "I was sent here by a man named Moody, he's an Auror and he wants to meet with Harry."

"Have him come here," McLain replied. "Come with him, you have ten minutes to get him here before I start getting nervous."

"I'll be right back," Tonks agreed quickly. The two old men watched her go and McLain smiled fondly.

"She's a good lass," McLain said after a moment of thought. "Kept very still and wouldn't take her eyes off my hands, she's learning at least."

"Bah," the other man said in disgust. "Still don't think women have a place in combat or as coppers."

"Times are changing," McLain said with a shrug. "So far as I'm concerned it just means that they aren't hiding how dangerous they can be anymore, get a couple glasses ready for me would you? One of the good stuff for me and one of the worst stuff you can find for my guest."

"And the girl?" The old man asked.

"Give her whatever she wants," McLain said with a shrug. "Doesn't matter to me."

"I'll get everything ready," the old man said sourly. "Anything else?"

"Could you empty out the small smoking room on the first floor?" McLain added, "I'll be meeting my guest there."

"I'll do that," the old man agreed.

"I'll be waiting here," McLain said. "Have fun."

McLain pulled his watch out of his pocket and watched the minutes pass. Seven minutes had passed and the second hand was on the four when there was another knock on the door.

"Wondering when you'd show your face." McLain opened the door and.

"With such a kind invitation?" Moody replied with a leer, "I came as soon as I could."

"Right this way," McLain said motioning towards the hall.

"What about me?" Tonks asked quietly.

"Into the parlor," McLain replied. "Someone will see to you."

"Thanks," Tonks said. The two men watched as the young Auror walked away.

"She has potential," McLain spoke suddenly. "Has a long way to go."

"That she does," Moody agreed. "Let's get down to business."

"Third door on the right," McLain replied.

The two men walked down the hall and into the smoking room. Taking seats across from each other, McLain waited for Moody to make the first move.

"Haven't seen you since before your father died," Moody took a sip of his whiskey and nearly spat it out. "Good booze."

"Filtered through a dozen cats just for you," McLain said with a grin. "Never did hear how the old man bought it."

"He was a tough old bastard." Moody smiled. "Took two dozen of them to bring him down in the end, and they only succeeded because he'd been drinking."

"Old man never could hold his liqueur," McLain shrugged.

"Only three of them survived," Moody's smile deepened. "For about three days, St. Mungos couldn't do much for them . . . I thought you were dead."

"It's good to see you again too," McLain nodded. "How's your wife?"

"Still alive," Moody smiled. "She gave me a son."

"How is he?" McLain wouldn't take his eyes off the other man.

"In St. Mungos with my daughter in law," Moody closed his eyes. "I tracked down the ones that did it."

"Dead?" McLain nodded.

"No," Moody shook his head. "I put them in Azkaban, I wanted them to suffer."

"They escape?"

"Yeah," Moody nodded. "I need to speak with your boss."

"What are their names?" McLain wanted to keep the conversation back on track.

"Lestrangle," Moody sighed. "There are three of them, I need to speak with your boss."

"Is he going to like this conversation?" McLain wasn't even blinking.

"I think so," Moody nodded. "I was going to offer him the information in my private files."

"I'll tell the Sergeant Major," McLain relaxed. "He'll set things up."

"Thank you," Moody smiled.

"It's the least I could do for my favorite cousin," McLain smiled. "I'm sorry about your boy."

"I still have a grandson," Moody smiled. "My wife raised him . . . he doesn't know that I'm his grandfather."

"Too dangerous," McLain nodded. "Too many people want you dead."

"Had him take my wife's name," Moody sighed. "It isn't easy but it's for the best."

AN: Another chapter down and I hope to have another out soon, might shift to another story but who knows. Do have a few ideas for the next chapter but we'll have to see how it goes. Enjoy. The conversation with Harry that you might have seen at the end of this chapter was left in by mistake, it's part of the next chapter.

Omake by vl100butchHarry, the Sergeant Major, and McLain entered a conference room with the General. The man in the grey suit was

already there with two other people. One was a man about the same age as the man in the grey suit and was dressed in excellently tailored suit. The other man was in the uniform of a Master Gunner of the United States Marines. McLain looked at the Master Gunner and gasped in amazement, "Zimmerman?" The Master Gunner looked at McLain closely and then recognition came to his eyes. "McLain, you and your knife are going to feel right at home. Do you recognize who's with me?" McLain looked closely at the second man in civilian clothes, who looked to be in his seventies. "Killer McCoy?" "Goddammit Ernie, it's been nearly sixty years and you still introduce me as 'Killer'!", the other man exclaimed. The man in the gray suit stepped in quite diplomatically at this point, "Major Potter, Sergeant Major, I would like to introduce you to Mr. McCoy, formerly Major McCoy of the United States Marines and Master Gunner Zimmerman, also of the United States Marines." "Another young Major, with a knack for getting out of tight spots, eh? I wasn't much older when I was made a Major", said McCoy. "So this is why you wanted Ernie and me?" Harry asked McLain how he knew the two Americans. He explained how they were all stationed in Shanghai before the war broke out.

Royal Irish Constabulary

Harry and Hermione had returned from the meeting and were relaxing in his office while they discussed the handbook that was going to be produced.

"What else should be included?" Harry muttered to himself, "we've got uniforms, guns, sword forms."

"Don't worry about it," Hermione said dismissively. "It's not your job."

"What?" Harry couldn't believe his ears.

"For one thing," Hermione explained. "You're learning to do all this yourself and for another it'll be your men writing it. Just give them the job and look over their results later, flag pole remember."

"Thanks," Harry said. He tossed his notes into the garbage and favored his friend with a smile, "I didn't even consider that aspect."

"It's not easy to delegate things," Hermione said sympathetically. "But it's sometimes necessary."

The two looked up when they heard someone knock on the door, "what is it?" Harry called out.

"It's me Major," Smythe replied as he opened the door. "You've got a visitor."

"Who is it?" Harry asked.

"An Auror named Moody," Smythe said. "He showed up while we were out and has been waiting to meet with you."

"Send him up," Harry said after a moment of thought.

"I will sir," Smythe agreed. "And I was hoping that I could borrow my lovely granddaughter for a bit while you have your meeting."

"Sure," Hermione agreed. "Have fun with Moody."

Harry pulled out his Webley and concealed the large pistol under his coat, he trusted Moody but it never hurt to be prepared.

"Thanks for agreeing to meet with me Harry," Moody said as he entered the room.

"No problem," Harry replied with a grin. "Have a seat."

"Thank you," Moody said.

"What can I do for you?" Harry asked the old Auror.

"I'd like young Tonks to tutor you in Auror tactics and spells." Moody smiled. "She finished near the top of her class and she knows her stuff."

"Why not you?" Harry raised an eyebrow.

"I've got other responsibilities" Moody shrugged. "And other people I have to teach . . . and I think teaching you would teach her just as much."

"Two for one," Harry said with a nod. "Ok, we'll set something up."

"You didn't say anything about it," Moody replied with a smile. "But I promise she won't be reporting to the headmaster."

"She doesn't have to." Harry shook his head. "He likes to tour other people's minds . . . Snape too."

"Oh really?" Moody's voice was low and dangerous, "mind if I do something about that?"

"Please do," Harry replied. "Though it does occur to me that it could be useful."

"Teach your grandmother to suck eggs." Moody smirked. "I'll take care of everything . . . thanks for telling me about this."

"Surprised you didn't know," Harry replied.

"Bit ashamed bout that," Moody admitted. "Means I'm getting complacent."

"Happens to the best of us," Harry said unhappily.

"That it does lad," Moody agreed. "And while I may be complacent, I'm not daft enough to miss that bulge under your coat."

"Be prepared," Harry replied.

"I'll agree with that," Moody allowed. "And I wasn't criticizing the fact that you didn't trust me, I was telling you that you either had to tailor the jacket to allow better concealment or that you had to get a smaller revolver for situations like this."

"I'll talk to Smythe about that," Harry agreed. "At the moment though, this is all I've got."

"You make do with what you have," Moody replied. "But don't hesitate to get something that has a better fit to your situation."

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"What did you want to speak with me about?" Hermione asked as Smythe led her down a hall.

"You wanted to learn how to shoot didn't you?" Smythe replied, "well then think of this as your first lesson."

"I've already read your book," Hermione said with an excited grin. "Just skimmed it really but it gave me an idea of how things are supposed to work."

"We haven't been back more then two hours," Smythe said with a grin. "And you've already studied, good gods girl are you trying to kill yourself?"

"I like studying," Hermione said primly.

"Good that you do then." Smythe reached into his pocket and pulled out a small snub nosed revolver. "This is what I'm thinking of having you carry."

"What is it?" Hermione asked curiously.

"It is a Royal Irish Constabulary," Smythe replied. The old man opened the loading gate and began popping short fat rounds out of the revolver.

"And what is a Royal Irish Constabulary?" Hermione asked quickly.

"A Royal Irish Constabulary is a smaller pistol then what Harry uses and I think it'll be easier for you to hold," Smythe lectured. "It can be chambered in the same caliber as what he's got so you won't have to worry about supplies and it's easier to conceal. Some of the disadvantages are that it takes more time to reload and it will have a greater felt recoil due to its low weight."

"Oh," Hermione said. The girl regarded the small weapon with undisguised fascination.

"This particular model fires a four fifty five caliber round nosed bullet," Smythe continued. "That's these little brass things in my hand."

"Can't I have something with smaller bullets?" Hermione asked with a frown. She picked up one of the stubby little rounds, "then there would be more room for more bullets."

"Never get into a gunfight with a caliber that starts with a number smaller then four hon," Smythe replied. "Those big bullets make big holes and big holes are a good thing to inflict on other people."

"Ok," Hermione said accepting that bit of logic. "How am I supposed to carry it?"

"Lots of ways," Smythe replied. "You could put it on your ankle or under a shirt."

"Ok," Hermione said.

"Another thing you might want to think of doing is to start wearing a dress more often," Smythe suggested.

"Why?" Hermione growled.

"Cause you could hide a bloody tank under a dress," Smythe replied with a smirk. "If you're going to be carrying this thing then that means that you'll carry it on your body and don't even think of suggesting that you could put it in your handbag. If you carry it on your body then you need to worry about ways to conceal it, a dress or skirt might be a good solution . . . or not, you'll have to figure it out yourself."

"Why shouldn't I carry it in a handbag?" Hermione asked.

"Cause a handbag isn't secure," Smythe explained. "And it's easy to grab, someone takes your handbag they take your pistol."

"I guess that makes sense," Hermione agreed. "How do I carry extra bullets?"

"There are a few ways of doing it," Smythe replied. "Unfortunately, there aren't any speed loaders for this little gem. One possibility is to just carry them loose in one of your pockets and another is to make a cartridge belt or wallet, I'm sure a clever girl like you will think of something."

"What about Harry's pistol?" Hermione asked, "it's different from this one so what does he do?"

"Right now he carries them loose in one pocket," Smythe replied. "I hope to scrounge up a couple of speed loaders for him though."

"Ok," Hermione said. "How do I take care of this thing?"

"Few potion recipes in my book for that," Smythe replied. "One of them is the best bore cleaner I've ever managed to discover. The first thing you do is take it apart, that's not so difficult."

Hermione watched in fascination as her great grandfather's skillful hands disassembled the small pistol.

"Why didn't you take it apart all the way?"

"It's not necessary if you're just cleaning it," Smythe explained. "And that's all we're learning to do here." Hermione watched as the old man reassembled the pistol and handed it over to her. "I'm sure it's not necessary to say this but don't play with it, read my book and take care of it the way I taught you, and be ready for a lot of practice."

"Alright," Hermione agreed.

"Take this too," Smythe handed over the cartridges he'd previously unloaded along with an extra box. "If you've got, it's no sense keeping it unloaded. Without cartridges it's just a lump of useless metal."

"I understand."

"Good, now let's go see if the Major's finished his meeting," Smythe suggested.

"Good idea," Hermione agreed quickly. The two of them went back to Harry's office and Hermione walked through the open door. "What did Moody want?"

"Wanted to talk about getting me trained," Harry replied. "He's going to have Tonks come in to give me lessons."

"Oh," Hermione said. "Mind if I join in?"

"Feel free," Harry replied.

"Since you mention training," Smythe spoke up. "I was hoping to get you some training with the lads."

"What kind of training?" Harry asked quickly.

"How to use that revolver of yours, how to use your new sword, that sort of thing." Smythe said quickly.

"Oh," Harry said. "When do you want to start?"

"Hoping to start soon," Smythe replied. "McLain'll be your first instructor, he'll show you how to use that knife of his and how to use your hands and feet. Knowing him he'll teach you a whole lot more than that but I don't know what his plans are."

"Ok," Harry agreed. "What's the hold up?"

"We didn't want to start until we could have a healer on standby," Smythe replied. "Safety first."

"Any reason we can't do a little shooting in the mean time?" Harry asked, "And before I forget, I need another pistol for concealed carry. The Webley's nice but it's a bit hard to hide under my jacket."

"We could probably get you a RIC like Hermione's got," Smythe said. "Not sure about being able to shoot right now."

"Why not?"

"We'll need a range sir, you could probably magic one up," Smythe replied. "Won't be able to do anything till we have a safe place to shoot and there aren't any of those in London."

"You have any idea how to do that Hermione?" Harry asked his friend.

"A few," Hermione admitted.

"Then feel free to do so," Harry replied. "I'll take care of the Ministry if they decide to send you a warning."

"Ok," Hermione agreed. "Where should I put it?"

"Basement might be the best place sir," Smythe spoke up. "We've got a bit of space there."

"Let's go take a look then," Harry suggested.

"Right you are sir," Smythe agreed. The three of them got up and walked down several flights of stairs to the basement.

"This looks like it might work," Hermione allowed. "What do you need me to do?"

"You wouldn't happen to have my book on you?" Smythe asked with a smile, "if you do there's a section on how to build an indoor range."

"One second," Hermione said. The bushy haired girl pulled out the book and flipped through it till she found the right section. "I'm going to be very tired by the time I finish this."

"Want me to arrange a ride for you?" Smythe asked.

"I'd rather stay in London," Hermione replied.

"I'll get you a room at the Cauldron," Harry said. "That way you can stay in London and you'll be close to Diagon Alley."

"Where are you staying?" Hermione asked.

"At the Cauldron," Harry replied.

"That'll be fine then," Hermione agreed. "Stand back."

The two men watched as Hermione cast several charms. The room seemed to blur as it expanded to accommodate the space needed to have a proper indoor range. When she finished, Hermione was swaying and looked ready to collapse. Harry stepped up to catch her as she finally lost her balance and fell.

"You ok Hermione?" Harry asked in concern.

"Yeah," Hermione said. Exhaustion colored her voice. "I don't think I'll be able to do any practice today though."

"That's fine," Harry assured his friend. "Why don't we get you back to the Cauldron so you can get some rest."

"Ok," Hermione agreed weakly.

"I'll have a couple men go along with you," Smythe said. "Just in case."

"Fine," Harry replied. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"No need to come early," Smythe said quickly. "Might be best to wait till late afternoon, nothing important planned for tomorrow."

"Alright," Harry agreed. "Let's go Hermione."

Harry helped his friend up the stairs where they were joined by a small detachment of troops. They were half way to the Leaky Cauldron before Hermione felt strong enough to shake off Harry's arm and walk on her own.

"Don't want them to think I'm helpless," Hermione managed to gasp. "And it probably wouldn't be a good idea to let them see you carry me in, who knows what the reporters would do with that."

"Bloody parasites," Harry agreed.

They made their way the rest of the way to the Leaky Cauldron and walked in. A hush fell over the room at the sight of Harry's uniform and several patrons eyed his soldiers nervously.

"What can I do for you Harry?" Tom ignored his other patrons and called out to Harry.

"I'm going to need another room," Harry replied. "One next to mine if possible."

"I can do that," Tom agreed. "I'd be happy to connect them and make them into a suite if like."

"Yes please," Harry said quickly. "Be sure my men get anything they want and send the bill to me."

"I will," Tom said. "Anything else?"

"Could you send up some food?" Harry asked. "I haven't eaten for a while and I'm getting hungry."

"It'll be up in a few minutes," Tom replied.

"You're a prince among men," Hermione spoke up. "Thank you Tom."

"Happy to help," Tom said with a blush.

Harry and Hermione made their way up the stairs and to Harry's suite of rooms. Harry spent a few minutes marveling at how different things looked thanks to the magic. In addition to the two bedrooms, there was now a sitting room at the entrance.

"This wasn't here before?" Hermione asked, noticing Harry's look of surprise.

"No it wasn't," Harry replied. "All these years and I'm still surprised at what can be done with magic."

"I think everyone feels the same," Hermione said quickly. "Unless they've grown up with it."

"Even then they don't know much," Harry said with a grin. "I'm always surprised at how ignorant purebloods can be about magic, it's understandable that they don't know much about the non magical world but . . ."

"It might be because we run into more unusual forms of magic than most people," Hermione said charitably. "You can't expect average people to know about all the odd little things that seem to crop up in our lives."

"I suppose," Harry said slowly. "But I still . . ." Harry cut off at the sound of a knock on the door. "Who is it?"

"S' me Tom," the reply was muffled. "Have your food."

"Just a moment." Harry walked over to the door and opened it, "come right in Tom."

"Thank you Harry," Tom said fondly. Tom placed the tray of food on the table and stood up. "Anything else I can do for you?"

"I don't think we need anything else," Hermione replied. "Thank you Tom."

"Yes, thanks Tom." Harry echoed.

"Happy ta help you two," Tom said with a blush. "Just call down if you need anything."

"We will," Harry assured the innkeeper.

"Have a good night then," Tom finished. The old man walked out the room and carefully closed the door.

"Eat up," Harry said. "You used up a lot of energy and you need to replace it."

"Any plans for tomorrow?" Hermione asked, ignoring Harry's over protectiveness.

"I thought it might be a good idea to go to the book store," Harry replied. "Pick up a few more books that might be useful to help run the company."

"Sounds good," Hermione agreed. "And we can get in a little practice shooting, I really want to learn."

"It's not easy," Harry spoke suddenly. "I got as close as I could before I fired my first shot."

"How many have you fired?" Hermione asked.

"Five," Harry replied. "I think, it's a bit fuzzy when I think about it. Everything went so fast."

"So you haven't done any practice?" Hermione wanted to be sure on that point.

"Not with live rounds," Harry agreed. "Didn't have anywhere to do it and I didn't have the ammunition to spare."

"Harry . . . what did you feel when . . . " Hermione broke off abruptly, "I'm sorry I . . ."

"Recoil," Harry interrupted his friend. "You wanted to know what I felt when I shot those death eaters right?"

"Yes," Hermione said slowly.

"They were there to kill innocent people," Harry explained. "And I doubt that they'd have been as quick about it as I was, to my mind that doesn't entitle them to any pity."

"I'm not sure I could be so cold about it," Hermione admitted with a wince. "I'm sorry Harry that came out wrong."

"Don't worry about it," Harry said mildly. "I know what you meant and you wouldn't be you if you if you saw things the same way."

"Thank you for being so understanding," Hermione said with a warm smile. "May I see your pistol?"

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours," Harry said with a smirk. "Why do you want to see it?"

"I'm just curious about the differences," Hermione replied. "I'd never even held a gun until today."

"Alright," Harry said as he pulled out his Webley. Hermione watched as Harry broke the pistol open and removed each of the fat cartridges. "Here you are."

"It's heavy," Hermione said, surprised at its weight.

"Yes it is," Harry agreed. "Suppose I can hit people with it if I run out of ammunition."

Hermione spent several minutes examining the large pistol before handing it back to Harry. "Thank you."

"Happy to help," Harry replied. Harry broke open his pistol and carefully reloaded it.

"Do you want to see mine now?" Hermione asked.

"Why don't we wait until tomorrow?" Harry suggested, "I'm a bit drowsy and I know that you must be exhausted."

"Ok," Hermione agreed. "Good night Harry."

"See you tomorrow." The two of them walked to their rooms and went to sleep.

AN: Had to get a chapter of this out today. In case you didn't notice, I originally posted part of this chapter in the last chapter. All I can say is, oops it's fixed now. Sharpe's Rifles was on BBC so I had to write more of this, it put me in an old soldiers mood and I've been writing during the commercials while I watch this movie. Dedicated to those that weren't as lucky, huah.

Omake by Edward C. Regal

cell phone call "Allah be blessed! Achmed, I don't know what happened! The assault group had gotten into the main arrivals hall at Heathrow, they were within a moment of beginning their attack. Suddenly there were some bright flashes and explosions, and when you could see again, they were all down unconscious on the ground, their weapons in a pile a few feet away. A bunch of old men were standing around them pointing at them and shouting for the security police. And then it was too late to do anything but retreat!" In a monitoring room some distance away: "Well, Miss Granger, you were spot on in your interpretation of the series of calls we had intercepted over the last few weeks. With the new tracer spells that you and your research team have come up with, we have been able to pinpoint the

locations of both the transmitter and receiver of that call as well as the others to within five meters. A security team is within thirty seconds of both and we should be able to roll up this group in the next hour or so. With the new truth serums and proper questioning, we should be able to take care of another group of Voldemort's sponsored terrorists." He continued, "Plus, it appears that the new "augmented prosthetics" that have been made available to the handicapped retirees the Major has recruited are a smashing success. A flash/bang grenade or two to disorient the terrorists, then close range stunners from a group of 'old men' that they would have completely overlooked. One might almost feel sorry for the baddies, they are so over matched..." The man in grey smiled and shook the young witch's hand, "Excellent job that you are doing. The General is quite pleased with young Major Potter and his troopers, and the comments coming down from Number 10 and the Palace Office are most cordial. You and the young Major should probably start thinking about a Palace visit some time in the future, I should expect." Hermione blushed slightly and then started furiously riffling through her mental library on proper dress, manners, and so on for herself and Harry when they would have a chance to visit the Palace.

Omake By vl100butch

McLain, Moody, Master Gunner Zimmerman, and the Sergeant Major were sitting in a private room at the Regimental HQ when a waiter came in and asked them what they wanted to drink. Master Gunner Zimmerman interrupted and asked, "If you have any Famous Grouse, bring us a couple of bottles. I have a feeling this is going to be a long discussion." "Grouse," exclaimed McLain. "Haven't we come up a bit in the world?" "When you worked for General Pickering as long as Ken and I have, you get a taste for the better things in life," Zimmerman replied. "Who's General Pickering?" asked the Sergeant Major. "He was a First World War Marine who came from a very rich family, he got called up for War 2 and later for Korea where he was a Deputy Director for the CIA. He died a few years back. His son and Ken went through the Platoon Leaders Course together in 1941," explained Zimmerman. "Then how did you know McCoy in Shanghai?" asked the Sergeant Major. Zimmerman explained that Ken McCoy was the youngest Corporal in the USMC in January 1941 and that he became infamous when he got in a knife fight with four Italian Marines and killed two of them with a Baby Fairbairn. McCoy

got out of a court-martial because Detective Sergeant Chatworth from Fairbain's Flying Squad knew him and ensured that members of the Flying Squad would testify in his defense. "I knew Chatworth when I was in China and had heard the story from him," Moody said. "Never thought I'd get the chance to meet McCoy. Is he still any good with that Fairbain?" "He can still teach and that's why the man in the grey suit asked us to come over," said Zimmerman. "That and we might be able to help out immediately with a couple of specialists." "What kind of specialists?" asked the Sergeant Major. Zimmerman spoke about bringing in three or four Navajo code talkers who were also squibs. He told the group that it was still not public knowledge that the Navajo code talker language is enchanted and cannot be translated by someone who was not a code talker.

To Build a New World

The General walked down the steril hospital hallway to meet with one of the finest men he'd ever served with.

"Good morning sir," the man on the bed called out as the General entered the room.

"Good morning Sergeant Mundy," the General replied with a smile.

"Have a seat sir," Sergeant Mundy gestured towards the room's one chair.

"How are you doing Danny?" The General fought hard to keep the pity out of his voice as he looked down at the crippled soldier.

"I'll survive sir," the Sergeant Mundy replied. "I'm sure I'll find something to take up my time when I get out of here."

"If you could see your way to doing me another favor," the General began. "I might have a job for you."

"What job sir?" Danny perked up, "would I be able to stay in the Army?"

"Officially it's just a ceremonial unit," the General replied. "Unofficially I can't tell you any more unless you volunteer."

"I volunteer sir," Danny replied. "Anything's better then being discharged. Tell me what I have to do sir and I'll do it."

"What I'm about to tell you may sound strange," the General began slowly. "But I swear to god that it's the truth."

"You've never lied to me sir," Mundy replied.

"Keep in mind that I can prove all of this later," the General began. "I've got a unit working for me made up of retirees, men who've done their duty and come back to the army to do more for their country."

"Yes sir," Mundy prompted.

"These men are old, the youngest are in their seventies." The General continued, "have you heard of the terrorist attacks that have been happening? Or the strange diseases that wipe out entire families in a night?"

"They have something to do with all that?" Mundy asked.

"They're working to stop the men behind it all," the General agreed.

"Why don't we just use the boys in the Regiment?" Mundy asked with a frown, "or even the bloody police?"

"Because these men . . . magic is real," the General said quickly. "There is an entire society of magic users living in England and the terrorists are members of this group."

"If you say so sir," Mundy said with a straight face.

"Keep in mind that I did say that I could prove it," the General reminded.

"I'd like to see that sir," Mundy said slowly.

"Just keep an open mind," the General replied. "The men in this unit are normal people that were born into a magical family. As an aside, they also have magical children born to non magic families."

"About the terrorists sir?" Mundy asked to get things back on track.

"Group of upper class families that don't think non magical people should be allowed to live," the General replied. "Only thing that makes them dangerous is that they've got magic and that the magical government is a group of corrupt cowards."

"I understand sir," Mundy said.

"The unit is fairly small at the moment, not much more then a company of men but I have high hopes for them." The General said

quickly, "they've got more experience than anyone else in my command and their officer seems to be fairly bright."

"Only one officer?" Mundy asked incredulously. "For a bloody company?"

"Right now it's just the cadre," the General explained. "One officer and a lot of good NCOs. They're a regiment on paper but they haven't had a chance to fill out their ranks."

"I see sir," Mundy said with a nod.

"I should probably warn you about the officer before you meet him," the General said with a smile. "He's young."

"I've had young officers before sir," Mundy replied with a grin.

"Not this young," the General disagreed. "If things were normal then he wouldn't even be old enough to join."

"Then why did you give him a commission?" Mundy asked slowly, "and who's going to get command?"

"He's got a commission because he's the one that brought everything together," the General explained. "He recruited the old men, forced the magical government to fund him, and then took the finished product to me."

"Could be a good Lieutenant," Mundy allowed. "If you pick the right Sergeant to watch him and the right commander to mentor him."

"He's a Major," the General said with a grin. "And he has command of the regiment. Don't let his youth fool you, the boy's a good officer."

"Will he do the job?" Mundy asked slowly, "combat's not a good place to have a green commander."

"He killed several of them the day before he came in to meet me," the General said with a feral grin. "And his men have told me that he's been in a dozen more battles before he hooked up with them."

"Any other leadership experience?" Mundy asked slowly.

"He commanded a group of children in a battle with several of the terrorists and the only injuries they suffered were taken care of after a short stay in the hospital," the General said with a nod. "And there are a few other incidents that I haven't been able to get the details to. Kid doesn't like to talk about what he's done and his men haven't heard most of it."

"What am I going to be doing for them sir?" Mundy asked suddenly, "can't be much use for a cripple like me."

"They said that they might be able to get you a pair of magical legs," the General replied hopefully. "They weren't sure but they thought it might be possible to bring you back to one hundred percent."

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Harry woke up late that morning and spent a few minutes staring at the ceiling. "Get up Harry," Hermione's voice brought him to full wakefulness. "I know you're awake, I can hear you moving."

"Just a second," Harry groaned. "Let me get dressed."

"Hurry up," Hermione's voice demanded. "We need to get to the book store."

"Never should have mentioned that," Harry muttered to himself. After quickly slipping on his uniform, Harry walked out of his room and gave his impatient friend a look of annoyance.

"Come on Harry," Hermione ignored Harry's look and grabbed him by the hand. "No time for breakfast if we want to have enough time to get everything done."

"We have three hours," Harry said with a forced smile.

"And I'm sure you'll want to do other things too," Hermione replied. "Let's go."

"Fine," Harry said with a sigh.

The two friends walked down stairs and through the back door to the entrance to Diagon Alley.

"Where to first?" Harry asked with a grin.

"Where do you think?" Hermione asked flatly.

"Bookstore it is," Harry agreed. Harry and Hermione walked up the alley to Flourish and Blott's. Hermione walked straight to the front counter after she entered the bookstore.

"Do you have any books on armor?" Hermione asked quickly.

"Third shelf from the back in the blue section," the clerk said with a grin.

"What about books on swords?" Harry inquired.

"Should be in the same section," the clerk replied.

"Thank you," Hermione said quickly.

"Why were you interested in books on armor?" Harry asked as they walked to the appropriate section.

"I like seeing you and my grandfather uninjured," Hermione replied primly. "And I'm going to do everything I can to keep you uninjured."

"Oh," Harry said simply. "Thank you."

"You're welcome Harry," Hermione said fondly. "Tell me if you see anything I might be interested in."

"I will," Harry promised.

"Here we are," Hermione said with a predatory grin. "Ooh this one looks good, and this one, I've got to have this one, and this one, and this one, can't leave this one behind."

Harry tuned out Hermione's muttering as he browsed. In the end, Hermione staggered to the counter under the weight of a stack of books that looked larger than she was and Harry followed with a short stack of his own.

"Um," the clerk began. "How do you wish to pay for this?"

"Charge it to this account," Harry replied. "It's for the unit," Harry explained upon noticing Hermione's quizzical look.

"Ok," Hermione agreed. "Let's go."

Harry glanced up at the rooftops as they exited the bookstore. "What are you looking at?" Hermione asked.

"Trying to spot the sharpshooters," Harry replied. "Looks like they picked good spots, I didn't see any of them."

"Are you sure they're there?" Hermione asked, reflexively looking up.

"They're there," Harry confirmed. "Wanna go get some ice cream?"

"Sure," Hermione agreed.

"Good morning," Fortescue greeted the couple with a smile. "What can I get for you?"

"Chocolate for me," Harry replied. "Hermione?"

"Vanilla," Hermione answered.

"Coming right up," Fortescue replied with a smile.

"So what did you get?" Harry asked with a smile, "I know you got more than just a couple books on Armor."

"I got everything they had on magical armor," Hermione agreed. "And several books on pureblood customs."

"Pureblood customs?" Harry echoed.

"Our friend in grey had a few questions," Hermione explained. "And I thought it might be useful to know after I thought about it."

"Know thy enemy," Harry agreed. "What else did you get?"

"Some history and charms books," Hermione replied.

"And?"

"And a few transfiguration books and maybe a book or two on enchantments," Hermione continued.

"What else?" Harry asked with a grin, "I know you and I saw how large that stack was."

"I also grabbed everything they had on spell creation," Hermione admitted. "It's supposed to be my family specialty so I figured that I should learn it."

"Good thinking," Harry agreed. "I . . ." he broke off at the approach of the proprietor.

"Here's your ice cream," Fortescue said with a grin. "And while you're here, I thought I'd thank you for dealing with those death eaters before they had a chance to hurt anyone."

"Happy to help," Harry replied quickly.

"Mind if I ask a question or two?" Fortescue asked with a grin.

"Ask away," Harry said.

"What's with the uniforms?" Fortescue said. "And what enchantments did you use on those strange staffs your men used?"

"I've joined the Army and this is the uniform," Harry explained. "And as for any spells . . ."

"I understand," Fortescue said with a knowing grin. "Can't let the secret get out now can you? Well, keep up the good work."

"I will," Harry agreed.

"That was odd," Hermione said after the man had left. "I don't think I've ever heard anyone thank you before."

"It doesn't happen often," Harry agreed. "But it does happen."

"It was still nice to see," Hermione said firmly.

"Yes it was," Harry agreed. "Was there anything else you wanted to do in the alley?"

"I'd like to pick up some potions ingredients," Hermione replied. "I can't think of anything else."

"Potions ingredients?"

"I wanted to try some of the potions in my grandfather's book," Hermione explained.

"Oh," Harry said in understanding. "How about we grab the ingredients and then get something to eat before heading over to the regimental building?"

"Sounds good," Hermione agreed.

The two friends went to the apothecary and Harry watched as Hermione flitted around the room gathering strange ingredients.

"Got everything?" Harry asked as Hermione dumped her selections on the counter.

"Yes I think so," Hermione confirmed. Hermione paid for the the items and the they walked out of the shop and towards the Leaky Cauldron.

"That didn't take long," Harry commented.

"I knew what I wanted to buy and I knew where it was," Hermione replied. "Of course it didn't take long."

"Takes me forever unless I'm buying the student kits," Harry replied. "But Potions has never been my best subject."

"You're competent at Potions," Hermione disagreed. "Better than most of the Slytherins in the class anyway."

"Thanks," Harry said with a grin. Harry and Hermione walked through the arch and into the Cauldron.

"Coming in for lunch?" Tom asked quickly.

"Yes," Harry agreed. "Could we get that corner booth?"

"It's all yours Harry," Tom said. "Any idea what you want?"

"I'll take whatever you think is good today," Harry replied.

"I'll have the same," Hermione said with a smile. "Thank you Tom."

"Happy to be of service," Tom said with a blush.

"So," Harry asked as they took their seats. "I couldn't help but wonder if you planned to go back to your parents house or stay here?"

"I don't know," Hermione said slowly. "Why? Is it a problem if I stay with you?"

"No," Harry said quickly. "But it does let me plan for the future if I know your plans, just asking."

"Oh," Hermione said abruptly. "Well . . . I guess I'm going to stay with you for a while," Hermione finally replied. "It lets me stay close to the bank and the bookstore so I can do my job easier."

"Makes sense," Harry agreed.

"Here's your food," Tom said as he walked up with a large tray. "I had a fresh pot of Irish Stew, it's good and I could get it to you fast. Hope you like it."

"I love Irish Stew," Hermione said in delight. "Thank you Tom, Irish Stew will be just fine."

"I've never had it," Harry said. "But how could I turn it down after you recommended it and that ringing endorsement."

"Just call me if you need anything," Tom said. The old man placed two bowls of soup and a basket of bread on the table. "Enjoy."

"We will," Hermione promised. Hermione grabbed her spoon and attacked the soup, eating it as quickly as she could.

"You really do like this huh?" Harry said in amusement as he picked up his own spoon, "good to know."

"Just try it," Hermione said between spoonfuls. "And you'll be eating this as fast as I do."

"It's good," Harry agreed. "It's a shame I haven't had it before."

"Why not?" Hermione asked.

"My family's a bunch of idiots," Harry replied. "I'm sure just calling it Irish anything would be enough to put them off it."

"Oh," Hermione said with a wince. She was always amazed at how low Harry's family could sink in her estimation.

Harry grinned as he watched Hermione rip off a piece of the bread to mop up any bits of soup that she couldn't get at with her spoon. "Ron would love to see this," Harry said conversationally.

"He eats like a pig because he's too lazy to show some proper manners," Hermione said primly. "It is perfectly acceptable to finish your soup with a slice of bread in these circumstances."

"If you say so," Harry said with a grin. "Finished?"

"Yes," Hermione agreed. "Let's go."

Harry and Hermione made their way back to the Regimental Building and Harry knocked on the door.

"Come right in sir," the old man at the door gave a quick salute. "Sergeant Major Smythe is down in the firing range."

"Thank you," Harry said returning the salute. "Would you like to go meet your grandfather?"

"Yes," Hermione said. "Maybe I'll finally get to do some shooting."

"With any luck," Harry agreed. "Let's go."

They carefully made their way down the stairs and were amazed at the changes the room had gone through. There was a wall of sandbags circling the room and there was a large metal object at the end of the room.

"What's that thing?" Hermione asked.

"That?" Smythe glanced at the large metal object, "is what's called a snail trap. It catches the bullets and spins them around until they lose their velocity."

"Why do you need it?" Hermione asked with a frown. "I thought I magicked everything up last night."

"You expanded the room and warded the walls so that they'd stop small arms fire," Smythe agreed. "The sand bags and the snail trap keep things safe."

"Oh," Hermione said with a smile. "Safety first."

"Glad to see that you've been paying attention," Smythe said with a dry smile. "First thing you have to learn is that firearms are loud and you should always protect your ears with something." Smythe tossed both of them a strange looking pair of earmuffs. "Wear these when you're practicing."

"Ok," Hermione agreed. "What else do I need to know?"

Smythe spent the next hour going over firearms safety and the fundamentals of marksmanship. "Got all that hon?" Smythe asked with a proud smile.

"I think so," Hermione agreed.

"Then put on your muffs and take a place at the firing line," Smythe instructed. "Major, if you'd do an old man a favor?"

"What can I do for you?" Harry asked.

"Stand behind Hermione and help her hold her arms right," Smythe replied with a straight face. "I know you've got that part down but I haven't seen her stance yet."

"Alright," Harry agreed. Hermione blushed as she felt her best friend's breath on the back of her neck. "Just relax," Harry instructed. "And remember what you've been taught."

Hermione thumbed back the hammer and got a good sight picture, then slowly let her breath out and squeezed the trigger. "How'd I do?" She asked nervously.

"Low and to the right," Harry replied. "But not bad, try it again."

Harry and Hermione managed to put about two hundred rounds down range before they were disturbed.

"Sorry to bother you Major, Sergeant Major, Ms. Granger." Jones said with a grin. "But Ms. Blake's here with a group of people and she's requested a meeting with you."

"Tell her I'll be right up," Harry replied.

"Yes sir," Jones replied quickly.

"Let's get these pistols cleaned up and be on our way," Harry suggested.

"Let me have someone take care of that for you sir," Smythe suggested. "You don't want to keep Ms. Blake waiting."

"No I don't," Harry said. "But I don't want to be without my pistol either."

"Take this," Smythe said. The old man handed over a Royal Irish Constabulary identical to the one he'd given Hermione the day before. "Had one of the boys go over it last night, it's from the first batch of equipment the army's released to us."

"Thanks," Harry replied quickly.

"Just slip the holster inside your trousers and let your jacket fall over it," Smythe suggested. "Doubt anyone will notice it."

"How do I keep it from falling down my leg?" Harry asked with a grin.

"Had it magicked up to stick," Smythe replied. "Got one for you too hon."

"Thank you," Hermione said as she accepted her new holster.

"Now let's get to that meeting then," Smythe suggested with a smile. "Must be important for Ms. Blake to come here without calling ahead first."

"Sounds good," Harry agreed. The trio walked up the stairs and were directed to one of the meeting rooms.

"Thank you for agreeing to meet with me so soon Major Potter," Daphne said with a fond smile. "I have some people that I'd like you to meet."

"Can I offer any of you something to drink?" Harry asked with a glance around the room. "Then what is this all about?"

"These are some of the people that have left the magical world after graduation," Daphne said. "I thought you might be interested in meeting them because three of them were fully trained Aurors during the rise of the last two dark lords and the remaining five were healers."

"And I later went on to medical school," a distinguished looking woman with silver hair added. "So the wizarding world has a use for its castoffs again?"

"I have very little to do with the wizarding world," Harry said quickly.

"Then why did you contact us?" The old woman asked, in the short time since the meeting had started she had become the spokesman for the group.

"Several reasons," Harry replied. "The first was to warn you that Voldemort, that's the latest dark lord. Is back and I thought you should be aware of the danger."

"Thank you," the woman said. "And forgive my manners, my name is Dr. Margret Harper."

"Major Harry Potter," Harry replied with a smile. "The other reasons I contacted you was to ask for your help. I could use healers and Aurors, if all else fails I was hoping to give everyone of the . . . 'castoffs' some extra defence training."

"I think we can all agree to that much," Margret said with a smile. "What else do you have planed?"

"I'd like to make a new magical world," Harry replied. "One that the purebloods don't control and I don't care if we have to smash what's

already in existence and rebuild it as something new or if we have to build something separate, we will have something better."

"A laudable goal," Margret said after a moment of thought. "What have you done to accomplish it?"

"I've contacted you," Harry replied. "Unfortunately my first priority is Voldemort, everything else will have to wait for my full focus."

"I see," Margret said with a nod. "I am willing to help you accomplish both of your goals if you will have me." The others quickly sounded their agreement.

"Forgive me for asking," Harry said after a moment of thought. "But why did you leave the wizarding world? I mean, you're all professionals."

"The Aurors were downsized after the defeat of their dark lord," Margret replied with a sneer. "And many of the healers were politely asked to leave to make room for someone's family member."

"I see," Harry said. "I wish I could say I was surprised to hear that."

"May I make a suggestion?" One of the ex-Aurors asked.

"Please do," Harry said quickly.

"We've all been Hogsmeade," the ex-Auror began. "Why don't we make our own town?"

"It could work as part of our overall strategy," Hermione said after a moment of thought. "It'd be nice to have a central location to keep all the important things."

"Do you think we can get the government to approve this?" One of the healers asked suddenly.

"I'm sure I can sell the idea," Daphne agreed. "Put the word out that I want to talk to muggle born students."

"One think that nobody's mentioned," Smythe startled the room by speaking up. "Is that there are probably more muggle borns then there are purebloods. At a guess if everyone were to come back to the wizarding world."

"Then we'd be the majority," Hermione said in shock. "We'd be able to change the government to something less corrupt."

"That assumes quite a few things," Smythe cautioned. "But it's something to think about."

AN: As I said before, I could use modern weapons but there is no point to arming everyone with P90s or whatever the flavor of the month is (Personally I don't like the caliber.) I might be doing another fic where Harry has a pistol and I'd probobally use something modern in that like a Sig P239 or something, this is not that story.

Another Omake by vl100butchThis may not turn out as funny as I visualized, but I had to try BTW--Blue Thunder and Black Lightning are real American Indian names (I went through Basic with them)--hope y'all like it Sergeant Jones was at the Leaky Cauldron with Gunnery Sergeants Blue Thunder and Black Lightning having a couple of butterbeers and swapping stories with Tom. Gunny Blue Thunder started to tell the tale of his meeting with the esteemed Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge. "Major Potter led us in, the Master Gunner, the Sergeant Major, MacLain, and me. Gunner Zimmerman and I were carrying Thompsons and you should have seen the stares we got," exclaimed Gunny Blue Thunder. "You'd thought we were from another planet or something." Gunny Blue Thunder continued to explain about how Major Potter had decided it was really time to mess with Fudge's mind. "We had to go to a theatrical supply house to get the headdress. I'm a Navajo, we don't wear that crap. The tomahawk was something else entirely, we ended up calling Gunner's grandson back in South Carolina," said Gunny Blue Thunder. "Why did you have to call South Carolina?" asked Jones. "It gets even better, his grandson calls one of the Chinese cousins and has to have the tomahawk custom made in China," said Gunny Blue Thunder. "China?" asked Jones. "Yeah, Gunner's wife was Chinese, she died a few years back, really smart lady; they built a business empire in South Carolina," said Gunny Blue Thunder. "So you're in Fudge's office, wearing an Indian headdress, carrying a Thompson, and a tomahawk?" asked Jones.

Gunny Blue Thunder described how Harry played Fudge like a violin, laughing as he describes what happened. "He goes in and tells Fudge it's time to get out of the way, or he was going to run over him. Fudge starts with a bunch of crap about 'Well, I'm the Minister of Magic.'" He went on to describe the looks on the faces of the Master Gunner and Sergeant Major, who successfully made a mighty effort not to laugh at Fudge as he blustered on. Harry then looked at Gunny Blue Thunder and raised an eyebrow, his cue. "Sir," he asked, reaching for his tomahawk. "Can I scalp him now?" "Percy Weasley fainted and Fudge wet his pants, I don't think we'll have any more trouble from them," said Gunny Blue Thunder.

Omake by Edward C. Regal

cell phone conversation "We have him in sight, he is walking down Diagon Alley towards Gringott's, the girl is with him" "Do you see any of his men? They are always near him." "No, none of them have been seen anywhere. I am on a roof overlooking most of the area and have seen none of them." "Good, you may give the command to attack by shooting green sparks as soon as you are ready." "Right, I am moving closer to the edge of the roof and will shoot sparks in ten seconds." Behind the DeathEater, a shape quietly rose up from the roof, a concealing cloak that mimicked the tar and gravel sliding off its shoulders. The last thing the terrorist heard was a soft voice saying, "Ach, laddie, ye've been sadly misled if you thought we would let the Major go out without a proper escort..." Later. "Major, I hope that you and my lovely great grand-daughter had a pleasant morning walk?" "Yes, we did, Sergeant. It was especially quiet and peaceful this morning, very light clouds and sunshine, not too crowded. I assume that the men we have stationed in Diagon Alley had a quiet morning as well?" "Yes, sir, that they did. A bit of morning exercise, enough to get the bodily juices flowing, but then otherwise very quiet." "Very good, Sergeant. Morning exercise is always a good idea. Is there anything else that I should know about?" "No, Major, just morning exercise and then some public service efforts on our parts - a little trash removal."

From the Shanghai Police

Harry and Hermione were in Harry's office poring over their new books. A knock sounded and Harry looked up, "yes?"

"Someone here to meet with you sir," Jones stuck his head through the door and replied.

"Name?" Harry asked mildly.

"Boy named Neville," Jones replied. "McLain told me I should come up here and tell you right away."

"Send him up," Harry replied. "Thank you."

"Yes sir," Jones said quickly.

"What do you think Neville wants?" Hermione asked with a frown.

"I don't know," Harry said with a shrug. "But I suspect that we'll find out if we wait."

"Stop being clever with me," Hermione said with a mock scowl. "And don't even think of doing that to poor Neville."

"I . . ." Harry cut off at another knock on the door. "Yes."

"It's me Harry," Neville said as he opened the door.

"Have a seat Neville," Harry said with a motion towards his chair.

"I'd rather stand if you don't mind," Neville said nervously.

"Alright," Harry agreed. "What can I do for you Neville?"

"I've never been much a wizard," Neville began, as he spoke the boy's back stiffened. "Never been good at anything except Herbology. Gran told me about how they used to send squibs to the army, she said I had a cousin that was sent to the ranks in the old days. I'd like to buy a commission," Neville rushed out. "Or if you won't have me as an officer then I'd like to enlist as a private soldier."

"Are you sure Neville?" Harry asked slowly.

"At least until we deal with Voldemort," Neville agreed. "They'll never take me as an Auror, you're my best chance to avenge my parents."

"Neville," Hermione said sadly.

"It's my duty," Neville said stubbornly.

"Jones," Harry called out.

"Yes sir," Jones replied quickly.

"Get McLain and Smythe up here," Harry commanded. "And any other senior Non Commissioned Officers you can find."

"Yes sir," Jones agreed.

"Harry," Neville began.

"Just wait," Harry ordered.

The three friends waited in silence until the men were assembled and brought up.

"You called for us sir," Smythe asked.

"Yes I did Sergeant Major," Harry agreed. "This is Mr. Longbottom, he has asked to join the Regiment as either an officer or an enlisted man."

"Yes sir," Smythe prompted.

"He was with me at the Ministry along with that lovely granddaughter of yours and his performance against the enemy was beyond reproach." Harry continued, "he tells me that he wishes to join the Regiment because he wishes the chance to kill a couple of death eaters. My question is, are you willing to place yourselves under his command?"

"McLain," Smythe ordered.

"Without reservation Sergeant Major," McLain replied.

"Jones," Smythe continued.

"Yes Sergeant Major," Jones agreed.

"And everyone else can go hang," Smythe finished.

"Then let me be the first to welcome you to the 95th Rifles Lieutenant." Harry got up from behind his desk and offered Neville his hand, "one of the men will give you a list of equipment that you will need to purchase. The Regiment will provide you with a pistol, the uniform and sword are yours to buy along with anything else you may wish."

"Thank you Harry," Neville said quickly. "You won't regret giving me this opportunity, I promise that I won't let you down."

"I wouldn't have let you near my men if I thought you would," Harry said gently. "The men'll help you sort things out, listen to your sergeants they know more than either of us ever will and keep your ears open."

"Thank you," Neville said quickly.

"Dismissed." Harry allowed a smile to crack his face as the group left his office.

"Are you sure that was wise," Hermione asked quietly after the door had closed.

"I'd trust Neville with my life," Harry said simply.

"I would too," Hermione said quickly. "I meant letting him join to get revenge."

"Better with us then on his own," Harry said tightly. "With luck, he'll be able to keep his hatred from clouding his judgement."

"And if he doesn't?" Hermione asked sadly.

"In any case I'll put him with a good sergeant," Harry continued. "It won't be a problem."

"I hope you're right Harry," Hermione replied.

"So do I," Harry agreed. "But there's only one way to find out, Neville will do his job or he'll die. Your Grandfather mentioned something to me, he said that combat is the best example of Darwinism in action. The smart and successful live, the dumb and the cowards die."

"That fails to take a lot of things into account," Hermione retorted.

"Yes it does," Harry agreed. "It's overly simplistic but it remains a valid statement."

"So you're sending Neville out to succeed or die?" Hermione asked.

"Something like that," Harry said. "I'm sending every new man I get into a meat grinder, the ones that learn and have luck will continue on and the ones that don't . . ."

"Will die," Hermione finished.

"Or get transferred to a non-combat unit or get thrown out of the regiment," Harry added. "Most of the men think death is a better choice."

"That's terrible," Hermione whispered.

"War is the most terrible thing there is," Harry spoke calmly. "A wise General once said something to the effect that it was a good thing that war was so terrible or else we would grow too fond of it."

"I . . ." Hermione's reply was cut off by a knock at the door.

"Enter," Harry commanded.

"It's me sir," Smythe said. "Do you recall me saying that I wanted you to take a few lessons with McLain?"

"Yes I do," Harry replied. "Why?"

"Because now that we have a couple Doctors standing by, I thought it best that we begin." Smythe finished.

"What Doctors?" Harry asked calmly.

"Couple from that group you met with yesterday agreed to be on call for any emergencies." Smythe explained.

"Excellent," Harry said as he rose from his seat. "Do you think that I should change?"

"Your uniform will be fine sir," Smythe said. "But you may wish to take off your jacket and belt before you begin."

"I'll do that," Harry agreed. "Coming Hermione?"

"Sure," Hermione agreed.

"Do you have your revolver with you Hermione?" Smythe asked as the trio walked down to the training area.

"No," Hermione replied. "It's locked up in Harry's desk . . . why?"

"Just asking," the old man replied with a smile. "And I'd like you to get into the habit of keeping it with you at all times."

"Why?" Hermione asked, "we're safe here aren't we?"

"As safe as we can be," Smythe agreed. "But it's best to keep to your routine, get in the habit of carrying it so that you feel odd when you don't have it with you."

"I will," Hermione promised.

The group walked into the training room to find McLain waiting for them.

"Hello sir," McLain said with a grin. "Ready to begin?"

"As ready as I can be," Harry agreed. "What are you going to teach me?"

"How to fight," McLain said simply. "Using your fists and knives."

"Throw in the barroom stuff too," Smythe commanded. "Teach him the right way to break a bottle and what not."

"Alright," McLain agreed. "I'll teach you the nasty stuff too then."

"Mind you," Smythe added with a smirk. "Nasty has a whole different meaning when it's McLain talking."

"I can't help it if everyone else is squeamish Sergeant Major," McLain said with a fake whine.

"Are we going to talk?" Harry asked with a grin. "Or are we going to teach the young Major some dirty tricks?"

"The second one sir," McLain replied with a grin. "If the Sergeant Major and his lovely granddaughter would be good enough to get out of our way."

Smythe led Hermione to one side of the room and placed a protective hand on her shoulder.

"Thank you," McLain continued. "Why don't we start with a few basics?"

"Sure," Harry agreed.

"Sir, the first is that there are no rules in a fight.," McLain began. "Honor is just another word for stupid and the only unfair advantage is the one the other guy has."

"So what you're saying is that if I fight fair then I'm doing a great disservice to myself and my men," Harry offered.

"Exactly sir," McLain agreed. "Would you like to begin sir?"

"Let's," Harry agreed.

"Sir . . . this is going to be very painful. " McLain said slowly. "Are you sure you want to do this?"

"I need to learn this," Harry replied simply. "And we do have healers on hand, do your worst."

"S' the only way I know how to teach it sir," McLain said apologetically.

"Don't even think of going easy on me," Harry said as the two men circled each other. "I can take a punch."

"Yes sir," McLain agreed.

Hermione watched in horror as her friend fought the old man. At the start of the fight, she'd had no doubt that Harry would win . . . now . . . now she was afraid that her best friend wouldn't survive.

"You've got to stop this," Hermione screamed as struggled in her great grandfather's grip. "He's killing him."

"No he's not Hermione," Smythe replied, the old man winced as he watched his young commander's nose get broken. "He's giving him the tools he needs to survive . . . oof."

Hermione drove her elbow into the old man's stomach and followed it by stomping on the bridge of his foot. Her wand was half way out before the old man managed to slap it out of her hand.

"Don't forget who taught you how to do that," Smythe said with a proud smile. "I taught you all you know about fighting, not all I know."

Hermione's response was a low and dangerous growl, she used every dirty trick in the book, she bit, she scratched, and she screamed loud enough to wake the dead but none of it was enough to make the old man let go.

"Finished yet?" Smythe took it all calmly.

"I'm not going to let you keep doing this," Hermione yelled. They both winced at the sound of Harry's arm breaking and tears began flowing down Hermione's cheeks. "It's inhuman."

"It's the quickest way to teach him how to handle himself," Smythe tightened his grip. "McLain learned to survive in the roughest school I ever heard of. He's showing the young Major the lessons he learned."

"I thought he was a Squib in the army?" Hermione asked, she was biding her time until the old man made another mistake.

"He is and was and is again, but McLain has always been an odd one." Smythe shook his head. "He came into the army rather late by our standards. He was stationed in Shanghai before the war and learned quite a bit from a chap named Fairbairn." Smythe took a deep breath. "After that he was sent to Malaysia and he earned his place as Major Potter's trainer by virtue of the fact that when it came time to surrender, he went into the jungle and spent the next few years eating snakes and knifing enemy soldiers to death . . . or was it knifing snakes to death and eating enemy soldiers? I never can recall . . ."

Smythe released his granddaughter at the end of the fight and she rushed across the room to Harry's side. "Are you ok Harry?" She asked.

"Fine," Harry groaned. "Good work McLain, it's been a while since I've been beaten this bad."

"I aim to please sir," McLain replied. "You weren't kidding when you said you could take a punch."

"Product of an unfortunate childhood," Harry replied with a false grin.

"Both of you shut up," Hermione commanded. "And get that healer in here now."

"It's not that bad Hermione," Harry tried to comfort his friend. "I've had worse, remember when I lost all the bones in my arm?"

"Be quiet," Hermione sobbed.

Harry awkwardly wrapped his good arm around his friend's shoulder.

"I'll just be getting that healer now," Smythe said on his way out of the room.

"I'll go with you Sergeant Major," McLain said quickly.

"I hate seeing her cry," Smythe said after they were out of earshot. "But it'll be worth it to give the Major a bit of experience."

"Not to mention the excuse you gave the young Major to put his arm around her," McLain said slyly. "Never knew you were so ruthless Sergeant Major."

"Hello Doctor," Smythe ignored McLain's assertion and called out to the healer.

"Gentlemen," Dr. Harper greeted the two men. "What can I do for you?"

"The Commander needs you," McLain replied.

"What did you do?" Dr. Harper asked with a glare.

"Broke his arm and a couple ribs," McLain replied. "Four I think."

"And his nose," Smythe added.

"What?" The woman said in shock, "why didn't you get me sooner? Where is he? He must be in terrible pain."

"Not the Major," McLain said proudly. "He didn't even flinch when I broke his arm and he cracked jokes about it after the fight, tough as nails he is."

"I asked you where he is," the old woman said with a glare. "Not how tough he is."

"Training room," Smythe said. "Try not to make a big production of it, the Major doesn't like being the center of attention."

"Get out of my way both of you," the old woman commanded, pushing past the two old men.

"Well," Smythe began as he trailed behind their healer. "Do you think we put on enough of a show for the lads?"

"Major Potter got his arm broken and laughed it off," McLain said with a grin. "I think the lads will find that downright inspirational. Don't know if we could do it with the new lieutenant, he's got some steel but not like the Major."

"He doesn't need to be at this stage in his career," Smythe replied with a shrug. "He's got a few years yet."

"No offence Sergeant Major," McLain whispered as they reentered the room. "But I don't think I'm going to want to be around your lovely granddaughter for quite some time."

"I understand," Smythe replied. His lovely granddaughter was spending her time alternately cooing over the commander's injuries and shooting murderous glares at the cause of those injuries. "I understand."

"Think the Major'll hold this against me?" McLain whispered, "certainly score points with your lovely granddaughter if he did."

"I doubt it," Smythe replied with a grin. "But he might decide to break your arm to even things up."

"Wouldn't that be just the thing he'd do," McLain said with a delighted grin. "Fancy another go sir?"

"Give me a minute," Harry called back. "I still have one rib to pop back in to place and I'm game for another round."

"You will not," the old Doctor commanded. "You will have at least one day of rest before trying any of this foolishness again."

"Listen to Doctor Harper," Hermione agreed. "She knows best."

"You're in luck McLain," Harry said with a grin. "Looks like you don't have to bruise your knuckles on my face for another day."

"Thanks sir," McLain said with a laugh. "It's good to see an officer that looks out for his men."

"Help me up," Harry asked his friend with a smile.

"Doctor?" Hermione asked the older woman.

"If he wants to be a fool then it's not my place to stop him," Harper replied. "Help him up."

"Thanks," Harry rose to his feet with a wince.

"I noticed several old injuries while I was treating you?" the old woman asked.

"Anything that'll cause me trouble?" Harry replied.

"Nothing I can't fix," Dr. Harper said slowly.

"Thanks," Harry said cheerfully. "I'd appreciate that, just tell me what you need."

"Major Potter, those injuries . . ."

"Happened in the past," Harry interrupted. "And I think it would be best if we all agreed to let the past stay in the past."

"If that is your wish," Dr. Harper agreed. "Just assure me that it will not happen again."

"The situation has been resolved," Harry replied. "And I very much doubt that I will ever meet any of the principals involved again."

"That is all I needed to hear," Dr. Harper said slowly. "Thank you Major Potter."

"Thank you Doctor," Harry replied. "This has been one of the more pleasant visits to a medical professional that I've ever had to pleasure to have."

"Thank you," Harper said simply.

"I was wondering if I could ask you a few questions about replacing lost limbs?" Harry changed the subject. "A few of my men are missing various parts of their bodies and I expect that I will be getting a few more that suffer from the same difficulty."

"Unfortunately magic has not found a way to regrow lost limbs," the Doctor said sadly. "The muggle world has made progress in reattachment and I have high hopes that magic could aid in the process but it is not something I've had the chance to try."

"What about enchanted replacements?" Harry asked quickly, "I know of a man that has an enchanted peg leg."

"Prosthetics have gotten much further then simple peg legs," the Doctor replied quickly. "I believe that there may be some merit in your suggestion . . . but wouldn't it violate those blasted laws on enchanting muggle items?"

"Not to sound flippant," Harry began. "But thanks to Fudge's low intellectual prowess, I am above the law. It would only be illegal if I decided it was illegal and then I would have to arrest myself."

"Really?" The Doctor asked with a sly smile, "if that is the case then I may have a few other ideas that I'd like to run past you."

"Go ahead," Harry agreed. "I'm willing to consider anything that could help my men."

AN: Sharpe's Eagle was on BBC, had to write a bit with that on didn't I?

Omake by vl100butch it continues

A pitched battle was raging on a London street and as usual, the 95th and friends were destroying the Death Eaters. One Death Eater, our favorite foil, Draco Malfoy snuck away from the battle and thought he was going to turn the tide. He pointed his wand at a telephone box and recited a spell that was supposed to summon a demon. Well, as you can guess, our boy Draco in his own inimitable fashion screwed up the spell and the world will never be the same. The door to the telephone box opens and an unmistakeable voice is heard singing a song near and very dear to the heart of every United States Marine. Gunny Black Lightning looked at Master Gunner Zimmerman in amazement, "It can't be, can it?" As the firefight was dying down, Master Gunner Zimmerman shouted, "Marines, fall in by the telephone booth." As they fell in line by the telephone box, a very familiar rabbit comes marching out in Marine Blues with the stripes of a Gunnery Sergeant (yes he actually had a Marine paybook during WWII with the rank of Gunnery Sergeant), carrying a 1903 Springfield, singing the Marine's Hymn. He stopped in front of Master Gunner Zimmerman and asked, "Hey doc, where are the bad guys?" Zimmerman thought that in over fifty years of service, he had seen some strange things, but this was about the strangest thing he'd ever seen. However, good Marine that he is, he pointed over at Draco and said, "There's one over there." Harry and Hermonie walk up to the scene, Harry starts laughing and Hermonie starts to, "That can't be real, he's supposed to be a cartoon character, what's he doing here?" The medics came up and quickly gave her a calming potion so she could watch the fun. "Surely you don't think a rabbit with a muggle gun can hurt me, do you?" Draco snarkily said. "Of course we are going to fight according to the rules." "Sure doc, none of this (butt stroke to Draco's groin), this (second butt stroke across his nose), or that (swing with the rifle stock, hitting Draco upside his head). As Draco lay unconscious on the street, Gunnery Sergeant Bugs Bunny, USMCR asked. "Are you ready to fight now?" Major Potter walked up

with a big grin, offered his hand and said, "You know, this can be the start of a beautiful friendship."

The above omake continued.

Authors notes: been seeing some critiques about why Americans would be getting involved. If you haven't read the Corps books, at least look at the first couple of chapters of the first volume and the first Korea volume...I think you will get some idea of how the connection started. Next, if you don't like my OMAKEs, write one yourself, the way you want it, the more the merrier. Disclaimer---I don't own anything and in the immortal words of Flip Wilson, "The Devil made me do it!" Thanks again to all in the creative process---a lot of this is recycled to the situation off of the Jecoanis forum on Again JKR, WEB Griffin, Chuck Jones, et al are the creators, I'm just borrowing them and taking them off on a tangent. -----

----- The Regimental Association, after Draco Malfoy's capture. A group of people and one large rabbit were sitting comfortably in one of the private rooms each enjoying their favorite beverage. The group as a whole were still dumbfounded to discover the existence of their latest member. "So Bugs, how did you get here?" asked Gunny Black Lightning. "Not sure exactly, I was supposed to be on the way to Pismo Beach when all of a sudden I turned up in a phone booth. I was able to see what was going on outside and did a quick change into uniform and got my rifle," Bugs replied. Bugs went on to explain that he could do some magic as long as it was funny. "You have to admit, marching out into the middle of a gunfight in Dress Blue, singing the Marine's Hymn is pretty funny?" The group admitted that the sight of a six foot rabbit marching into a gunfight singing was pretty funny. Bugs then asked, "What kind of bad guys are you fighting? I never expected to see a gunfight in the middle of London." Harry came into the conversation, "Bugs, we're a group of witches and wizards, fighting along with some non-magical people to stop an evil wizard. Think of him as Wile E. Coyote, except smarter." "That's a pretty serious problem, doc. Doesn't look like I'm going anywhere for a while, can you use some more help?" Bugs asked. Harry and his senior staff looked at each other and nodded, Hermione spoke for the group. "Sure Bugs, we can use all the help we can get. We just have to figure out the best way to use your talents to the fullest. After all, you are an Oscar winning rabbit."

Sport And Social

The Taxi he'd hired let Sergeant Mundy out in front of the Regimental building and it took the young NCO a few minutes to get the hang of using crutches with his new legs. He was supposed to be in rehabilitation learning to use the tin legs they'd given him, learning to be a useless member of civilian society. Learning nothing of any importance he'd decided. Escaping from the hospital had been child's play for a man that had been trained to escape from hostile countries, the unfamiliar prosthetic legs had just added a bit of difficulty to an otherwise simple operation. Mundy hobbled up to the door and gave it three short raps.

"Yes?" An old man in a green uniform answered the door, "how may I help you . . . sir."

"Sergeant Mundy, late of the Regiment to see the commander." Mundy replied, "I'm a bit early but he should be expecting me."

"Come right in," the old man stepped aside. "I'm Corporal Parker, late of the House Guards and current member of the 95th Rifles."

"Pleasure to be in the company of soldiers again," Mundy said through clenched teeth.

"It is indeed sergeant," Parker agreed. "Have a seat while I inform the commander of your arrival."

Mundy wondered for a moment if he was making a mistake in joining this group of old men. One thought squashed his doubt, a reminder of the alternative . . . nothing was worse than a discharge.

"Right this way," Parker's whispered comment startled Mundy out of his thoughts.

"Right," Mundy agreed. It took a minute for him to get to his feet but he'd be damned if he'd ask for help. "Show me the way then."

Parker took Mundy down the hall and into an old fashioned elevator. "Hope you don't mind," Parker said gesturing to a cart. "But I've got to

bring up the commander's lunch and there's too much to take the stairs."

"That's fine," Mundy replied, hiding his relief. "I wouldn't want to be responsible for making things difficult for you."

"Don't let the Major's age fool you," Parker said as the elevator rose to its floor. "He's a stone cold bastard, exactly the sort we need in command."

"Oh?"

"Trust me," Parker continued. "He'll be one of the best if he lives long enough."

"And we're left holding the bag until then," Mundy finished.

"No," Parker said sharply. "That won't happen, the Sergeant Major is too good for that to happen."

"Listens to his Non Coms then?" Mundy asked with a smile, "better than most of the men I've had to work for."

"A fighting officer that listens to his men and has the sense to know when he's wrong," Parker agreed. "And one of the toughest bastards I've ever had the pleasure to serve."

"I heard he'd been in a couple of fights," Mundy prompted.

"Don't know too much about that," Parker admitted with a frown. "I do know that he got into a fight with a dozen of them and left them all cooling on the ground the day he came to meet us. Knew he'd need help and couldn't think of a better source than the army."

"Really?" Mundy asked with a smile.

"Then he got us uniforms and took us out to the alley," Parker continued. "Group of the bastards showed up and the Major ordered us to kill them all without batting a eye, just asked for a prisoner if we could get one without endangering ourselves."

"Hmmm," Mundy didn't want to commit to anything but it wasn't sounding as bad as he'd feared it would be.

"We're here Sergeant," Corporal Parker announced. "The Major said to send you right in."

"Right," Mundy replied. Straightening his back, Mundy hobbled to the center of the room and snapped a salute. "Sir, Sergeant Mundy Reporting."

Harry rose from his desk and returned the salute. "Have a seat."

"Thank you sir," Mundy replied quickly.

"Didn't expect to see you this soon but I'm glad to have you," Harry began. "Have you had a demonstration of magic yet?"

"I have not sir," Mundy said stiffly.

"Then watch the pen on my desk," Harry ordered. Harry waved his wand and transfigured the pen into a mouse and then back into a pen. "That was Transfiguration, one of the commonly taught branches of magic . . . any questions?"

"Not at this time sir," Mundy said automatically.

"Feel free to ask if you think of any at a later date," Harry said mildly. "I have an open door policy, any of my men can come talk to me about anything for any reason at any time."

"What are to be my duties sir?" Mundy asked nervously.

"At the moment," Harry began. "I'm thinking of having you as one of my trainers. Don't mistake me, my men are some of the best the Empire ever produced."

"But they're a bit behind the times," Mundy suggested. "I understand sir."

"Good," Harry continued. "Eventually, you'll be in my own private branch of Sport and Social. The General tells me that there are more men that were forced to leave the Regiment due to injury."

"Thank you sir," Mundy said quickly. "I . . . thank you sir."

"Was there anything else you wanted to ask?"

"No sir."

"Then welcome to the regiment," Harry said. "Report to Dr. Harper to see if she can't get you pair of new legs."

"Sir." Mundy rose to his feet and saluted.

"Dismissed," Harry said as he returned the salute. "If there is a girl waiting outside, please tell her to come in."

"Yes sir," Mundy replied as he hobbled towards the door. Not a bad assignment, he thought to himself, much better then his most optimistic guess. Mundy stepped out into the hallway and was immediately confronted by a young girl with brown hair. "The Commander asked me to send you in," Mundy said politely.

"Thank you," Hermione replied. "You're the new man aren't you?"

"Yes ma'am," Mundy agreed. "Sergeant Mundy, formerly of the Special Air Service."

"Welcome to the Regiment," Hermione said with a smile. "I'm sure you'll like it."

"I'm sure I will," Mundy replied. "Could you tell me where to find Dr. Harper?"

"Third door around the corner," Hermione said quickly. "Door with the red cross on it."

"Thank you," Mundy said with a nod. "If you will excuse me, I have to get going."

"Have a good day," Hermione replied. With that, Hermione opened the door to Harry's office and stepped in. "Hello Harry."

"Hey Hermione," Harry said looking up from his desk. "Met the new man yet?"

"Saw him in the hall," Hermione agreed. "Seemed like a good man."

"Yes he did," Harry replied. "Would you like to share my second lunch?"

"Second?" Hermione questioned.

"Looks like Parker thinks I need to eat more," Harry explained. "That or he's older then he says he is."

"I'll eat some of it," Hermione agreed. "If all else fails I can always get Lav to teach me a few dieting charms."

"I . . ." Harry was interrupted by a knock at the door. "Come in."

"Moody's here to meet with you Major," one of the men stuck his head in.

"Send him up," Harry commanded.

"What do you think he wants?" Hermione asked.

"I don't know," Harry replied. "But I'd wager that we'll soon find out."

They waited in silence until Moody entered the room, "thanks for meeting with me Harry."

"Any time," Harry said with a smile. "What can I do for you Moody?"

"Got some information for you Harry," Moody replied. "Location of one of the death eater safe houses."

"Great," Harry said with a smile. "But why give it to me?"

"You've been given the task of breaking the insurgency haven't you?"

"Yes I have," Harry agreed.

"That's why," Moody replied.

"I was asking why you didn't tell the Headmaster," Harry said calmly.
"You are a member of his little club after all."

"He wouldn't have done anything with it," Moody explained. "At most he'd have had an order member watch it, Albus doesn't seem to understand that information is useless if you don't use it."

"I understand," Harry said slowly.

"Don't get me wrong," Moody continued. "Sometimes the best use of information is to do nothing with it, you'll sometimes lose your source if you act on your information and you have to weigh that against the potential use of the information you get. Confused yet?"

"A little," Harry admitted.

"It's like this," Moody began. "Most of the information you're going to get will be from scouting things out yourself or from prisoners, that you'll need to act on fast. If Voldemort is as smart as he likes to think he is then he'll change things around after he hears that one of his men have been taken so it doesn't matter what you get from them. Information expires quickly, something that could be golden today won't be worth anything tomorrow. So you have to act on it fast if you're going to act on it."

"What's the other kinds of information?" Harry asked.

"Well," Moody began. "There's the kind of information you get by going through their garbage or their mail, the kind you get by finding patterns, and the kind you get from informants. Using any one of these sources too much could make them useless as once they figure out that you're using them then the enemy takes steps to keep you from being able to use them." Moody paused, "I'm not sure I

explained that clearly enough. It's like this, you have a spy in the death eaters and he tells you about a raid. You stop the raid and that makes Voldemort suspect that you have a spy in his death eaters, he finds the spy and you lose that source of information. You stopped one raid but you lost your spy, understand?"

"Yes I do," Harry agreed.

"What about you Hermione?" Moody's head swiveled.

"I do too," Hermione replied. "But it all seems so cold."

"It is that," Moody said with an approving nod. "But it's the way things work, you like to read don't you?"

"Yes."

"Look up the assassination of Admiral Yamamoto," Moody suggested. "Another thing you could do is look at how Enigma and Magic were used."

"I have been neglecting my non magical education," Hermione mused.

"So what type of information is this?" Harry asked, "can I use it without destroying it?"

"You can," Moody agreed. "I did a little scouting and I found a few patterns and you don't need to worry about anything but sitting on it too long."

"I understand," Harry said with a nod. "Do you want in on this?"

"Might be best if I were to be somewhere else," Moody suggested. "I'd like to be with you but . . ."

"If you were I might lose you as a source of information," Harry said in understanding.

"You might make me a less effective," Moody corrected. "I might lose a few of my sources if they knew I was passing things to you."

"Then if you'll excuse me." Harry got up and walked to the door.
"McLain," Harry yelled down the hall.

"Coming sir," the soldier called back.

"Have a good day Moody," Harry said without looking.

"I'll just take my leave then," Moody suggested, giving a sealed envelope to a surprised Hermione. "Good luck Harry."

"Luck is for those that aren't good enough," Harry retorted with a grin.

"True," Moody snorted as he walked out of the room.

"You called sir?" McLain asked as he walked past Moody.

"Close the door," Harry commanded. "And have a seat."

"Yes sir," McLain replied, closing the door and taking a seat in front of Harry's desk.

"How good are you at room to room?" Harry asked suddenly, "I've got a house I need taken."

"I'm better in the jungle," McLain admitted. "But I can do the job."

"Good," Harry replied shortly. "Hermione."

"Yes?" Hermione looked up from Moody's letter.

"Could you brief Sergeant McLain on our intelligence?"

"Right," Hermione said with false confidence. "Moody . . . it looks like there are between five and twelve death eaters living in a house in a muggle neighborhood, none of them are veterans of the last war."

"Do we know their names?" McLain asked calmly.

"No," Hermione said after a quick glance at the notes. "Looks like the idea that they weren't in the last war was based on their age, they are all in their early to mid twenties."

"Do you have any plans?" McLain spoke up again, "I'd like to have an idea of what I'll be dealing with."

"Just a rough sketch," Hermione said, passing a piece of paper to McLain. "I don't know how accurate it might be."

"Better then nothing," McLain muttered. "Any hostages?"

"None we know of," Hermione replied. "Any other questions?"

"No, thank you ma'am." McLain said absently, refusing to take his eyes off the paper. "How do you want to handle this Major?"

"I want you to pick a small group of men to act as the main attack." Harry began, "have the men dress in civilian clothes and get them as close to the house as you can before you open fire."

"Yes sir," McLain agreed. "Anything else?"

"Not at the moment," Harry said quickly. "Pick your men and I'll take care of everything else."

"Right," McLain agreed. "All I need to worry about is how I'll take the house and who I'll take with me."

"Get to it," Harry commanded. "Hermione, I want you to get in contact with the man in grey and see if he can smooth things with the local authorities. The last thing I want is to loose a man to some jumpy policeman . . . or for one of the men to kill a policeman."

"Ok Harry," Hermione agreed. "Anything else?"

"No," Harry said quickly. "Concentrate on that, I'm going to see if I can get us some magical support. I don't want any of them to escape because we didn't put up some wards."

"Sir," McLain stood up.

"Dismissed," Harry said absently.

"Yes sir," McLain replied, walking out of the room. McLain was deep in thought as he walked towards the Sergeant Major.

"What's on your mind McLain?" Smythe asked.

"Major's got a job for me," McLain replied. "Group of death eaters in a house."

"And," Smythe prompted.

"I suppose it's too much to ask for STEN guns?" McLain said hopefully.

"I'd rather you didn't use them," Smythe replied. "Major's got a plan and it'd be best not to show the other side anything new."

"Alright," McLain agreed. "Then I want a Webley for every man that's going into the house with me."

"That I can do," Smythe agreed. "I'll have a talk with the Armorer, he'll be ready to issue in a few minutes."

"I'll get the men ready," McLain replied.

IIIIIIII

"The area's been cordoned off by the local Police," Harry spoke in a low voice. "Wards will go up when you're ready to breach."

"Yes sir," McLain agreed.

"I have sharpshooters positioned to cover doors and windows but you're on your own until I bring the rest of the men in," Harry continued. "Any questions?"

"No sir," McLain spoke quietly.

"Then get me that house," Harry commanded.

"Yes sir," McLain said with a smile. "You want us to tie a bow on it sir?"

"As is will be fine," Harry replied with a laugh. "Off with you."

McLain dropped his smile as he walked towards the men he'd picked to join him on this raid.

"Is it a go Sergeant?" One of the men asked.

"We're a go," McLain confirmed. "One last equipment check and on your feet . . . let's go."

IIIIIIII

Max had been a death eater for six months and he could say without hesitation that it was the best six months of his life. He'd never cared much about blood issues until the recruiter had pointed out that it was just another reason to push people around, Max had always liked pushing people around and would be forever grateful to the Dark Lord to allow him to take things to the next level. His first kill had been a muggle, one of the many that had knocked on the door to their current safe house. Max smiled when he heard a knock on the door, looked like he was going to have to add another notch on the handle of his wand.

He decided to play it cool as he walked towards the door, it was always fun to watch the disbelief in their eyes as the light faded. "Yes?" He asked as he entered the door to reveal a hard looking old man, "can I help you."

"Name's McLain," the old man said with a smirk. "Tell them who sent you when you get to hell."

"Wha?" Max began but stopped when he felt a pain in his stomach. Looking down, he was just in time to watch in horror as his intestines snaked onto the ground.

"Tougher then I thought you'd be," McLain said calmly as he grabbed the death eater's hair with his left hand. A quick jerk doubled the death eater over to meet McLain's ascending blade. "That did it," McLain muttered as he stepped over the death eater's body.

The remaining death eaters proved to be no challenge and the raid was over in seconds. "Can't believe they were all bunched up in one room." One of the men said with a grin.

"The weren't expecting us," McLain replied. "And there still might be one or two of them hiding in the other rooms, don't let your guard down. I want this place secure before the Major takes it in his head to come in here."

"Right Sergeant," the men replied. Slowly, methodically they spread out and began searching the rest of the small house. "McLain . . . I think you need to come in here."

"What is it?" McLain asked in annoyance as he stormed into the room. "Get the Major," McLain said with a frown. "Tell him I have something he needs to see."

"Yes Sergeant," the man agreed.

"And tell him to bring the Doctor," McLain called out after the retreating man.

McLain was let to himself for several minutes before Harry walked through the door, "what is it McLain."

"On the ground sir," McLain indicated a shaking woman curled up in the corner. "Looks like they kept her around for a bit of entertainment."

"In here Dr. Harper," Harry called out over his shoulder.

"Out of my way," the old woman pushed past Harry.

Harry looked down at the pitiful figure, "anything you can do?"

"I can make her comfortable," Dr. Harper replied. "I can't promise anything more than that."

"I see." Harry raised his voice, "McLain."

"Yes sir," McLain called out, instantly at Harry's side.

"Did we take any of them alive?" Harry growled.

"A couple sir," McLain agreed.

"What was that?" Harry asked, "I'm afraid I didn't hear you."

"I said no sir," McLain repeated himself. "They died to the last."

"Good," Harry said coldly. "That will be all sergeant."

"Yes sir," McLain said without expression.

"McLain," Smythe caught the Sergeant outside the door. "Find out what they know first."

"Right Sergeant Major," McLain agreed.

Mmmmm Curry

"How'd it go?" Hermione pounced on Harry as he walked into his office.

"We rescued one hostage, took no prisoners, and didn't loose a man." Harry replied, "a success all around."

"Hostage?"

"They picked up some poor muggle to keep themselves entertained," Harry explained. "The Doctor says that she'll live but that might not ever . . . she's like Neville's parents."

"Oh," Hermione whispered. "I'm sorry."

"Me too," Harry agreed. "St. Mungos wouldn't even look at her, said it would violate the statute of secrecy."

"They what?"

"Advised us to wipe her memory and drop her someplace that she'd be found . . . or to do the kind thing as they put it and kill her," Harry said with false calm.

"What'd you do?" Hermione asked, afraid to hear the answer.

"We took her to a hospital," Harry replied. "And checked her in as a Jane Doe, I told the Police that she was a victim of a group of terrorists. They asked us for more information but I told them that it was all classified, I . . . if I had any doubts about what I was planning to do they died today. I'm going to change the wizarding world or break it and build something new, it can't last as it is."

"I . . . " Hermione didn't know how to respond to that, she couldn't think of any words she could say that would make things better. "I'm sorry you had to see that."

"So am I," Harry replied. "I'm sorry that anyone had to see that."

"What are you going to do now?"

"I don't know," Harry whispered.

"Well . . . there are still a few hours of daylight," Hermione began. "Would you like to get something to eat."

"I don't know if I want to go to the Leaky Cauldron right now," Harry said weakly.

"Then we won't go to there, have you ever had a Curry?"

"Uncle Vernon doesn't approve of foreign foods," Harry said with a smile. "Never had anything that he didn't think came from England."

"Then let's go expand your horizons," Hermione said quickly. "Come on, there's a place down the street."

"I don't have anything but Galleons," Harry protested.

"I've got money," Hermione replied, grabbing Harry's hand and dragging him out the door.

"But . . ."

"No buts," Hermione snapped. "You don't want to look like a chauvinist do you? Let me pay for this meal."

"Ok," Harry agreed.

Hermione dragged Harry down the stairs and past several snickering soldiers. "Going out then?" Smythe asked with a barely concealed grin.

"Harry's never had a curry," Hermione explained. "And I can't allow that to stand."

"Have fun then," Smythe replied.

"We will," Hermione called out over her shoulder. "Hurry up Harry."

"I think I just felt my arm dislocate," Harry muttered.

"What was that?" Hermione paused to look back at her friend.

"I said I think you're a bit more enthusiastic about this than I'd have thought," Harry amended himself. "I've never seen you like this outside a book store."

"But Harry it's curry," Hermione said as if that explained it all. "Something I can't get most of the year because they don't have it at Hogwarts. Don't get me wrong, the food they have is good it's just that . . . well, it gets a bit boring to have the same thing day after day."

"I think I understand," Harry replied.

"Good," Hermione said with a nod. "Now hurry up."

"As you command," Harry said with a smirk. Hermione dragged Harry up the street, into a small Indian restaurant, and into the nearest empty table. Harry watched in amusement as Hermione ambushed a waitress and forced the poor woman to take her order.

"There," Hermione said smugly. "Our food's on the way."

"Good," Harry replied with an amused grin.

"Don't say a word," Hermione growled.

"Not one," Harry agreed.

"So what are you planning to do tomorrow?" Hermione asked, changing the subject.

"Inspecting an old base," Harry replied. "From what I've been told it'll be perfect."

"Why's that?" Hermione asked.

"Mostly because it has a small empty village," Harry replied. "One that we can build into a Magical town."

"Why does it have an abandoned village?"

"It's a left over from World War II," Harry explained. "The government moved everyone out of the town and it's been sitting empty for the last fifty years."

"Oh, well then . . . food's here." She cried out in delight.

Harry poked the mass on the plate with his spoon, "yeah."

"Don't just poke at it," Hermione snapped. "Try it."

"Alright," Harry agreed, filling his spoon and put it in his mouth. "It's spicy," He choked.

"You'll get used to that . . . do you like it?" Hermione demanded.

"It's good," Harry replied. "Just spicy like I said."

"Is it going to be a problem hiding from muggles?" Hermione asked.

"No," Harry replied quickly. "From what I understand, there's nothing around but tank tracks."

"Tank tracks?"

"And other bases," Harry continued. "Biggest thing I'm worried about is the condition, place hasn't been occupied for quite some time."

"That makes sense," Hermione agreed. "How's Neville doing?"

"At a guess?" Harry asked with a grin, "he's wishing he was dead."

"What, why?" Hermione demanded.

"He wasn't in the best of shape when he joined," Harry explained. "He's doing a lot of exercise and undergoing some fairly intense training, lot's of physical exertion."

"It'll be good for him," Hermione said with a smirk. "Some of the girls thought it was cute, but he was always embarrassed about the fact that he's built like a sock filled with yogurt."

"The girls talk about Neville?"

"The girls talk about all the boys," Hermione replied. "It's one of the more common topics of discussion."

"You've been gossiping?" Harry asked, "One would almost think that you were a girl."

"I am a girl Harry," Hermione said playfully.

"No you're not," Harry disagreed with a grin. "What do you eat after having a curry?"

Hermione shot her friend a look, "I like having ice cream."

"Ice cream?"

"There's never a bad time to have ice cream," Hermione explained. "And it'll get rid of any burning sensations that you might still be feeling."

"Back to the alley or did you want to go to a normal place?"

"The alley will be fine," Hermione replied after a moment of thought.

"Then shall we?" Harry stood up and offered his arm.

"Let's," Hermione agreed taking his arm. The two friends made their way back to the Leaky Cauldron.

"Here for lunch?" Tom asked as they walked in.

"Just passing through," Harry replied. "How are things doing Tom?"

"All quiet since your men started watching things Harry," Tom said with a toothless grin.

"Good," Harry said. "Now if you will excuse us."

"You two have fun," Tom called out as they walked out.

As Harry and Hermione walked out of the Cauldron and into the alley, they immediately noticed something different. "Do things feel a bit off to you?" Harry asked.

"More people?" Hermione ventured, "and more smiles."

"Maybe," Harry agreed uncertainly.

"It doesn't matter," Hermione shook it off. "Come on."

"Yeah," Harry murmured. They walked the rest of the way up to Fortescue's and were immediately met by the proprietor.

"Major Potter, Ms. Granger, so happy to have you here." Fortescue shouted. "Business has been booming since you made the Alley safe for decent folk again."

"Happy to help," Harry said quickly.

"Had to ask those men of yours what your rank was," Fortescue continued. "Else I would have called you an Auror and that scary looking . . ." the man paused to remember something. "Sergeant of yours told me it wouldn't be proper."

"Glad to be of help," Harry assured the man. "Anything we can do."

"Business is up again and it's all thanks to you," Fortescue enthused. "Anything you want at cost, anything any of your men want at cost. I can never thank you enough."

"As I said," Harry repeated himself. "We're happy to help."

"What am I doing keeping you in the door," Fortescue scolded himself. "Come in, take the best table in the house." He waved the pair towards the corner booth, "order anything you like."

"Whatever you recommend," Hermione told the man. "Will be fine with us, we know that you'd only give us the best."

"Right away," Fortescue agreed.

"Take your time," Harry called out after the man. "I've got nothing but time."

"That was unexpected," Hermione said with a grin. "But nice, good to see that more people are finally thanking you."

"Us," Harry corrected. "I don't do this alone."

"Fine us," Hermione conceded. "Not that I've been doing much for you the last few weeks."

"Well," Harry said uncomfortably.

"Don't be like that," Hermione scolded playfully. "We haven't been doing much that would require research is all."

"Right," Harry agreed.

"Here you are." Fortescue was back in a flash with their order. "Large Sunday with two spoons, enjoy."

"Two spoons hmm?" Harry muttered after Fortescue had left.

"Just pick it up and eat," Hermione ordered. "So what do you think about . . . hey, is that Susan?"

"I think it is," Harry agreed. "Hey Susan, over here."

"Harry, Hermione." Susan's eyes lingered for a moment on the bowl of ice cream for a moment. "What are you two doing here?"

"Just enjoying a bit of time off," Hermione replied. "How about you?"

"I'm meeting my Aunt for some shopping," Susan explained. "Isn't it great the way things have quieted down isn't it?"

"Yeah it is," Hermione agreed.

"Pity the same thing doesn't happen to Knockturn Alley," Susan said with a grin. "But I guess you can't have everything, thanks again Harry. I gotta go, bye guys."

"No problem," Harry said to his classmate's retreating back. "What was that all about?"

"Don't worry about it," Hermione said as she put another spoon full in her mouth.

"I do have to wonder about Knockturn though," Harry continued. "Even if it didn't provide much benefit to Voldemort, it could still be a major propaganda coup."

"Propaganda coup?" Hermione asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Convince fence sitters that we're winning, and that Tom doesn't have a chance." Harry continued, "all else fails it might keep them neutral."

"I know," Hermione said with a grin. "I'm just surprised to hear you talking like that."

"It's my job to know these things," Harry said with a shrug.

"It's just hard to believe it sometimes," Hermione explained. "It's . . . it's just that I have a hard time believing that all this is happening sometimes. I half expect to wake up one morning to find that it's all been a dream."

"Finished?" Harry glanced over at his friend's bowl.

"Yeah," Hermione replied. "Why?"

"No hurry, but there are a few things I'd like to discuss with your grandfather."

"Let's go then," Hermione agreed.

IIIIIIII

As the sweat pouring down from his forehead burned his eyes and the straps on his pack dug painfully into his shoulders, Neville cursed the name Harry Potter and damned himself for ever getting the notion that joining the army could ever be a good idea.

"Close that gap sir," one of the instructors screamed. "Maintain your intervals."

"Damn," Neville sighed as he picked up the pace to get closer to the man marching in front of him. "Whoever thought it would be a good idea to have a forty kilometer march."

"Only five more to go sir," one of the instructors whispered to Neville as he marched by. "We're in the home stretch."

"My shoulders hurt, my eyes hurt, and my feet hurt." Neville said with a forced grin. "No point in stopping now and letting that all be for nothing."

"That's the spirit sir," the instructor agreed.

"I'm gonna kill him," Neville muttered to himself. "I'm gonna bloody kill Harry frigging Potter when I see him next."

AN: If all goes well I'll have more of this out soon. Neville is going to start playing a larger part in the next few chapters and to those that thought the instructor was being a bit more . . . polite then they remember their drill sergeant, well . . . it's because of a conversation with an ex Royal Marine who taught their new officers. He said that they treated their young officers like gentlemen from the beginning and was shocked at the way they were trained when he did an exchange with the US Military.

Open Ranks . . . March

"Just a bit further," the instructor encouraged. "You can see the Barracks now, right ahead."

Every one of Neville's sore muscles began to ease up, the pounding in his head went down, the burn in his eyes disappeared, and the boy felt a rush of energy . . . more than enough to take him through the last stretch. "Where are we going?" Neville asked as they marched past what was supposed to be the end point."

"Commander thought it would be best to add a few more clicks on the end of the march," the instructor explained. "Says that we need to do as much as is required and more."

"Harry you . . ." Neville was close to tears, a few seconds before he had been as high as he had ever been in his life and now it had all been taken away.

"You alright sir?" The instructor asked quietly. He hated to see the young gentlemen break, but better now than in the heat of combat.

"Bwahahaha," Neville started laughing. "It's frigging brilliant, pick up the pace Sergeant." Neville ordered, "I got plans later tonight and I'm not going to be happy if I have to change them because you dawdled."

"Right you are sir," the instructor said with a grin.

"How far are we going?" Neville asked with a grin.

"Two more kilometers sir," the instructor replied.

"Make it four," Neville said quickly. "And tell the men that if we finish before five then I'm good for the first round."

"Hear that lads," the instructor called out. "Let's get a move on."

IIIIIIII

"Glad you're back sir," Smythe greeted Harry at the door. "We've had an incident that you need to take care of."

"What happened?" Harry asked quickly.

"Four young hoodlums jumped one of the men."

"Any injuries?" Harry asked with a frown.

"Few broken bones," Smythe said with a grin. "They were just kids so he didn't get too rough."

"What do you need me to do?"

"Just walk down to the station and see if you can't smooth everything out sir," Smythe suggested. "Shouldn't be too much of a problem."

"Right," Harry agreed. "Who was involved?"

"McLain sir," Smythe said with a wince.

"And all he did was break bones?"

"Like I said sir," Smythe said. "They were just kids."

"I'll be back as soon as I can," Harry said with a sigh. "Where's McLain?"

"Inside sir."

"Call him out unless you need him for something else," Harry said with a grin.

"May I ask why sir?"

"I'm going to have him apologize to those misguided young men for being so rough with them," Harry said with a laugh.

"Don't think he'll like that sir," Smythe said with a grin.

"I think he'll see the humor if I explain it right," Harry said. "All I gotta do is point out that it'll be more of a taunt if he explains that he didn't realise that they were so fragile."

"I think you're right sir," Smythe agreed. "But just to be safe, why don't you let me explain it to him."

"If you wish," Harry agreed. "You want to tag along Hermione?"

"I've got some reading I'd like to catch up on," Hermione demurred. "But thanks for the offer."

"Have fun then," Harry said with a shrug. Harry waited outside while Smythe and Hermione went into the old building to get McLain. "One old man against a group of young toughs," Harry muttered to himself. "Shouldda been two of them, least then I could tell the joke."

"You wanted me to tender my apologies to the young miscreants sir?" McLain said with a smile.

"I wanted you to explain that you thought they'd be tougher," Harry said with a grin. "Rather you didn't show too much remorse."

"I think I know just how to handle things sir," McLain agreed. It took them a few minutes to reach the Police Station.

"What can I do for you?" The constable squinted at Harry's identification, "Major."

"One of my men was involved in a scuffle with a group of misguided boys," Harry replied calmly. "And he feels just terrible that he harmed them so much. Told me he wanted to explain that he didn't know that they'd be so weak and that he would have gone even easier on them if he'd known."

"Really?" The Bobby asked with a grin, "why don't you two come in? And why don't I make some tea for the Major while you go . . . apologize," the Bobby suggested.

"Right," McLain agreed.

"Course," the Constable began. "To protect the young gentlemen in the cell, I'm going to have to have several men watching the proceedings."

"Sounds sensible," McLain agreed. "You might wish to record it all with a camera too, just to be safe."

"We might at that," the man agreed. "Give me a minute to set things up." After a few minutes, a cup of tea arrived for Harry and a guide arrived for McLain.

"This way Sergeant," the Policeman said. The Policeman led McLain to a small cell holding a badly beaten street gang.

"Wanted to apologize to you boys," McLain began. "Didn't think you lot would be so fragile."

"You saying we're weak old man?" One of the toughs growled.

"Guess I am," McLain agreed. "Surprised the hell out of me to find out how weak you were."

"Why you . . ."

"Sit down," the leader of the gang ordered. "How'd you get so strong?"

"Few years in the army'll toughen anyone up," McLain explained. "Not sure if they'll take you though."

"Why not?"

"Your gang did get beaten by one old man," McLain said slyly. "Not sure if you could pass the standards, there's also the matter of a criminal record."

"What about it?"

"Not sure if they're taking folks with those these days," McLain said with a sigh. "All else fails, I guess you could join the French. Be good for them to have a few more of our boys in their legion . . . even boys as weak as you lot must be better than their usual recruits."

"Why you . . ."

"We'll think about it," the leader interrupted again. "Thanks old man."

"You boys stay out of trouble," McLain called over his shoulder as he walked out.

"Well?" Harry asked.

"Went rather well sir," McLain replied. "They're good boys . . . couple of them anyway."

"Let's get back then," Harry suggested. "Unless you have something you need to do?"

"No sir," McLain said quickly. Harry and McLain left the Police Station and were half way back when they were met by a nervous looking Private.

"Sergeant Major needs to see you sir," the Private said quickly.

"Let's go," Harry agreed. They followed the man to his Sergeant Major.

"What is it now?" Harry asked with a groan, if it wasn't one thing it was another.

"The navy sir," Smythe said with a wince. "And the Marines, some Artillery and Engineers mixed in too."

"I was hoping for a bit more detail Sergeant Major," Harry said flatly.

"Most of the men here came from the Infantry," Smythe explained. "With a bit of Cavalry and . . . well, some special service units mixed in for flavor."

"Go on," Harry said with a nod.

"The others found out what you're doing here and they want in," Smythe said with a frown. "I know the Boot Necks and I suspect that the others aren't willing to change colors so I'm not sure what to do sir."

"Enlist them into their branch," Harry ordered. "But tell them . . . better yet, take me to them."

"Yes sir," Smythe agreed quickly. Harry followed the old NCO into one of the large meeting room where he found an assortment of old men waiting.

"At ease," Harry called out as he entered the room. "I understand that you men have something to talk with me about."

"We want in," an older man in a black uniform said with a frown.

"Who are you?" Harry turned to look at the man.

"Sergeant Michael O'Day, Royal Artillery."

"Done," Harry agreed. "I can enlist anyone back into the army, any Artillery and Engineers can come in immediately."

"What about the rest of us?" One of the other old men yelled out.

"I'm going to have to talk to higher about that," Harry said with a frown. "So it may take some time to get approved."

"Who'd be the commanding officer?" One of the other men asked quietly. "Sorry sir, Sergeant Major Heart . . . Marine Commandos."

"Me," Harry said flatly. "Unless they decide to assign someone else."

"I don't have a problem with that sir," the old Marine said with a smile. "Cept the fact that as an Army officer, well . . . no offence sir but you

don't know how to use Marines the way they need to be used." Many of the other men muttered in agreement.

"Then teach me," Harry said with a shrug. "I'm always willing to learn if I have the time."

"I think we can all agree to that sir," Heart said with a smile. "Pleasure to take the Queen's shilling again."

"Welcome home," Harry said with a grin. "Give the clerk a list of personell and their specialties and we'll see if we can't find a place for everyone. I want the senior Engineers to meet with me in." Harry glanced at the clock. "Two hours, seven O'clock. Any questions?" Harry glanced around. "Then I'm going to get something to eat."

"The Sergeant Major's lovely grand daughter is in your office sir," McLain's comment sparked a round of laughter.

"Thank you Sergeant," Harry said with as much dignity as he could muster. "I always appreciate it when my subordinates anticipate my potential needs."

"Well sir, I figured that you'd want to . . ."

"Thanks again Sergeant," Harry interrupted. "I'm sure we all get the idea." With as much dignity as he could muster, Harry walked out of the room and up to his office.

"Hey Harry," Hermione said without looking up from her book.

"What are you reading?"

"I'm 'ere in the ticky ulster an' a broken billycock 'at, A-layin' on the sergeant I don't know a gun from a bat." Hermione read, "'Back to the Army Again, by Rudyard Kipling. My grandfather gave me a collection of his poems, said it was something I'd have to learn if I was going to . . . never mind."

"Mind if I read it?"

"He suggested that you might want to," Hermione said. "Brought another copy for you."

"Thanks Hermione," Harry said. "Now put down the book, I'd rather not have to explain to your mother that you've been skipping meals."

"What?" Hermione looked up and noticed the trays in front of her for the first time.

"Eat," Harry commanded.

"Fine." Hermione propped the book up so she could still read as she chewed. "How was your trip to the police station."

"Amusing," Harry replied. "For me and the Cops."

"Good, what was all the commotion downstairs?"

"New recruits," Harry explained. "Jealous that the Navy and the Marines weren't invited to the party."

"So you've got more soldiers now?"

"No, I've got Sailors and Marines." Harry said with a laugh. "None of them were willing to change branches." Harry noticed Hermione's look of confusion and decided to explain. "Would you be willing to switch houses?"

"Oh." Hermione nodded. "I guess that makes sense."

IIIIIIII

"Let me see your fingernails," Neville growled. "Good. You, get a fresh shave. I do not want anyone that doesn't look their best by the time of the inspection. Pity the poor bastard that makes us look bad during the inspection."

"Ease up a bit Mr. Longbottom," one of the instructors said calmly. "You've got Sergeants to kick ass, your job is to make plans."

"I'm a Cadet-Sergeant at the moment," Neville said with a smile.

"And now you're the Cadet-Captain," the Instructor said with a smile.
"Congratulations."

"Thanks," Neville replied with a smile.

"Between the two of us sir," the old NCO leaned in to whisper something.

"You could do with a shave yourself sir," he whispered.

"Wha?" Neville automatically reached up to rub his chin. "Bit of fuzz," he said with a delighted laugh. "Gran would be so proud."

"I'll take care of things from here," the instructor continued. "You get yourself ready and I'll take care of them."

"Thank you Sergeant," Neville said. "I'll be back fifteen minutes before the inspection to make sure everything is going smooth."

"I'll have them ready by then," the Instructor agreed.

AN: The incident where one of the soldiers beats up a few muggers is based on something that happened recently. likes to destroy address so if the below doesn't work then try searching, 70 year old man fights muggers or something along those lines. The part after it was a reference to a few things. Among the was the old idea that the British Army was composed of 'The Scum of the Earth, Enlisted for Drink.' McLain sees them as potential recruits but recognises the fact that the Army has higher standards then they did in his day.

I Hate Inspections

Harry was flipping through the book of poetry when he heard a knock on the door. "Enter."

"Sergeant Major Bly, Royal Engineers." One of the two men introduced himself.

"Chief Petty Officer Hooke," the other man said. "Not sure I'm the sort of engineer you were expecting but I might be useful."

"What sort of engineer are you?" Harry asked quickly.

"I kept ships from falling apart," Hooke explained. "I can keep most engines running and I can make or repair any parts that they might need."

"Have a seat," Harry waved. "Both of you."

"May I ask why you called us up here sir?" Sergeant Major Bly asked.

"The MOD gave me a small base that hasn't been used for quite a while," Harry said. "It comes with a small village that got annexed by the government during the war."

"You want us to make everything livable again sir?" Bly asked.

"And update what you can," Harry agreed.

"How bad is it sir?"

"A few of the buildings are in use at the moment so it can't be too bad," Harry said. "But I don't know, I haven't had a chance to make a visit yet. I am going to be there in." Harry glanced at the clock. "An hour for an inspection if you'd like to come along."

"I would sir," Bly replied. "Patrick?"

"I'd like to come along too if I may sir," Hooke said.

"Excellent," Harry said. "Make any preparations you need and join me here in forty five minutes."

"Yes sir," Bly agreed.

"Wouldn't miss it sir," Hooke said.

"Dismissed."

"Didn't see the need to introduce me?" Hermione asked after the two men had gone.

"Didn't see the need to interrupt your reading," Harry said quickly.

Hermione considered his reply for a few moments. "Ok, I'm willing to accept that. Mind if I tag along? I haven't seen Neville in a while."

"Sure," Harry agreed.

"Just let me put on something a bit more flattering," Hermione said.

"Huh?"

"Just because I don't normally choose to dress up, doesn't mean I don't know how." Hermione replied. "It also doesn't mean I won't if the situation requires it. According to my grandfather, this is a big thing for Neville and the others."

"Fine," Harry said. "You have forty five minutes."

"I'll be right back," Hermione agreed.

Harry watched his friend go and exhaled. "Big thing huh? Well, I guess it can't hurt to dress up a little."

IIIIIIII

Neville walked slowly up and down each row of assembled me desperately looking for any flaw that could make the unit look bad in front of their commanding officer.

"Well sir?" The NCO at his side asked.

"We might get through this without a scratch," Neville said with a slow nod. "Have them fall back into the barracks until you get the word that the commander has arrived. You may have them partly disrobe if you believe that it will make them more comfortable. Dismissed." Neville took one last look around before walking into the CQ area.

"Afternoon sir," the charge of quarters said as he hopped to attention.

"At ease," Neville said automatically. "We have a lookout ready to spot the Major?"

"Yes sir," the CQ agreed.

"Good," Neville replied. "I'll be doing paperwork in the office. Notify both the Instructors and I immediately after the Major arrives."

"Yes sir."

IIIIIIII

The group assembled in Harry's office and he gave them all a once over before he spoke. "First thing we need to do is make a quick inspection of the training battalion . . . which is about the size of a light company. Then I want you men to give the base a look over to get an idea of what needs to be done to get it running again."

"Clear sir," Bly and Hooke replied.

"Good, follow me." Harry led the two men down to the basement. "We've got an agreement with the goblins, part of it is a way to get from one place to the other through a couple connected doors."

"Sounds useful sir," Hooke commented. "Do these doors have to stay still or can they be moved?"

"Not sure," Harry admitted. "It's another thing I've got to look into."

"Could be important sir," Bly agreed.

"I'll add it to the list," Harry sighed.

"You could do that," Hook said. "Or you could delegate it to one of us."

"Look into it," Harry ordered as the three men walked through the door and walked out into an old brick building.

"This doesn't look so bad," Bly said. "If they're all like this then it'll be a snap to get this place up again."

"I also want the town to be made habitable again," Harry said. "With every modern convince, or at least the magical equivalent."

"You get us men to do the spell work and we'll have everything ready for you sir," Bly said quickly.

"Get in contact with Ms. Blake," Harry said. "She's in charge of coordinating our magical section."

"Time to get your game face on boss," Hooke said. "I just noticed one of their lookouts."

"Lookouts?"

"Smart officer will post lookouts to warn him when the brass is approaching," Hooke explained. "Gives him a bit of time to make sure everything is ready for you."

"Think we should slow down a bit?" Harry asked.

"If he doesn't have everything ready by the time you get there then he doesn't deserve more time," Bly said with a grin. "Be a good lesson for him."

"Right." Harry agreed. "Straighten up gentlemen, make sure they have examples to aspire to."

"Aye sir."

"Yes sir." The three men walked onto the parade ground just in time to see Neville call his men to attention.

"All present and accounted for sir," Neville said with a salute.

"Open them up," Harry said as he returned the salute.

"Open ranks," Neville called the preparatory command. "March." Like a well oiled machine, the first rank took two steps forward, the second took one, the third took none, and the forth took one back.

"Looking good Neville," Harry whispered out of the corner of his mouth. Without a further word, Harry walked up to the first man in the first rank. "Name?"

"Smith, James B. Sir." The man said loudly.

"Where are you from soldier?"

"Birmingham sir."

"Wife, kids?"

"None sir."

"What is the rate of fire for the L2A3?"

"Five hundred and fifty rounds cyclic," Smith chanted. "Approximately forty on burst."

"Good man," Harry said with a smile. Harry repeated the procedure with each man in the company, first asking a few personal questions and then some arcane bit of military trivia.

"Well?" Neville whispered as they walked back to the front of the formation.

"Sergeant Major?"

"Look good to me sir," Bly said. "Especially considering the fact that they're trainees."

"Chief," Harry turned to his other NCO.

"They look good to me sir," Hooke agreed.

"Good." Harry said. "Close them up Neville."

Neville stood at attention and faced the formation. "Close ranks . . . march." The new officer did nothing to suppress the jolt of adrenalin he got when the men moved back into position.

"Men, I'm going to be expecting a lot out of you. But only because our mission is of the greatest importance." Harry called out. "You will soon be taking part in a great thing, the restoration of peace and democracy to an oppressed people. This mission more than any other should remind you all the importance of our chosen profession." Harry took a slow look around. "Standing at attention is a bitch so I'll make this short. It's the soldier that protects the freedoms that civilians take for granted and in doing so is often asked to sacrifice his own. Never forget that these sacrifices will always be remembered if even by just a chosen few. Men, when the time comes, make your country proud." The cheer was deafening and Harry had a hard time keeping his face impassive. "Leutenant, take charge of your men."

"Company," Neville called out. "Dismissed."

"Good job with them Neville," Harry said quietly to his friend. "You have three days before I need you, have everyone go home to see their families."

"Yes sir." Neville agreed.

"You too," Harry said calmly. "Visit your gran, make sure she knows you care about her . . . hell, for that matter visit any young witches that might have struck your family."

"I will Harry," Neville agreed. "What's the mission?"

"We're taking the war to them," Harry said simply. "I don't want them to think that anywhere is safe or that they can run from me."

"Right," Neville's voice hardened. "If you'll excuse me sir?"

"Later Neville."

"Buildings don't look too bad sir," Bly said after Neville was out of sight. "Most of them anyway."

"Good," Harry said. "I'm also going to need you to construct an earthen fortification out in the moors."

"May I ask why sir?"

"Building a better mouse trap," Harry replied. "Rig it to explode and surround it with mines. Be sure to have several of those goblin doors put in and rig them to explode too."

"I understand sir," Bly said with a nod.

"I . . ." Harry cut off when he noticed McLain waiting in the distance. "Anything else gentlemen?"

"No sir."

"Not at the moment sir."

"Then if you'll excuse me," Harry said with a sigh. "McLain looks like he has something that he can't wait to tell me about."

"Makes me glad all I have to do is poke around several dangerous and condemned buildings, eh' Bly?"

"Got that right Hooke." Harry walked away from the two grinning men and up to McLain.

"You have the look of a man that's incredibly constipated," Harry said. "That or one that's having trouble concealing gales of laughter."

"Could we say it's the first sir?"

"What is it?"

"Ms. Granger has a surprise for you sir," McLain said with a grimace.

"What kind of surprise?" Harry demanded. "A good surprise or a surprise that will be the source of much merriment at my expense?"

"The later I'm afraid sir."

"That's what I suspected. Refresh my memory Sergeant," Harry said. "What to the regs say about men laughing at their commanding officer?"

"Well sir," McLain began. "If a soldier laughs at his commander and no one's around to hear it, did they do anything wrong?"

"You've been spending way too much time around Hermione," Harry laughed.

"Finally forgave me for the hand to hand lessons," McLain admitted with a blush.

"Let's get this over with."

"Right you are sir." Harry followed the strangely silent McLain back to his office. "Right in there sir."

"You may return to your duties sergeant," Harry said without looking over. "I'm sure you have quite a few things you need to see done."

"We're all good at the moment sir," McLain said with a grin.

"Was that a request for me to find some then?" Harry asked mildly.

"Suppose we could always fill sandbags or something sir," McLain said with a grin. "Us troops love doing that, I'll be on my way then sir."

"Good." Harry waited until the hall was empty and then took several calming breaths before opening the door. "I'm back . . . Dobby?"

"Hello Major Harry Potter Sir," the house elf said happily.

"Why are you wearing that uniform?"

"Dobby enlisted," Hermione said proudly.

"Private Dobby Major Harry Potter sir," Dobby said proudly. "Major Harry Potter sir's Batman."

"I thought you said you hated forcing house elves to work?" Harry accused his friend.

"Dobby is getting paid and wears a uniform," Hermione said smugly.

"Dobby had to take a pay raise and more vacation time," the elf said mournfully. "But Dobby thinks it is worth it to serve the great Major Harry Potter Sir, Commander of the ninety fifty rifles."

"Glad to have you with us Dobby," Harry said. This didn't look like something he was going to win so it was best to just go with the flow.

"Thank you Major Harry Potter sir." Dobby looked ready to burst into tears.

"Dismissed."

"Yes Major Harry Potter sir." The little elf snapped off a salute and disappeared.

"I was thinking that we could get all elves into . . ."

"Why don't we deal with that later," Harry suggested. "For now, I'd like to get a few reporters together to witness something I've got planned."

"When do you need them?" Hermione said quickly.

"Not for a few days," Harry replied. "For the moment, I'd just like to get a list together."

AN: News article below inspired me to write a bit more. Jist is that a 70 year old retired US military killed a mugger in self defence.

[http://seattlepi. translated for ff dot net below](http://seattlepi.com/nwsource/national/1102APCostaRicaTouristMugging.html)

[http:// seattlepi dot nwsorce dot com slash national slash 1102APCostaRicaTouristMugging dot html](http://seattlepi.com/nwsource/national/1102APCostaRicaTouristMugging.html)

The End of Innocence

The two friends spent the morning practicing with Tonks and after a rather humiliating defeat, decided to call it a day.

"Well," Harry said with a grin. "What do you want to do now?"

"You don't have anything you need to do?" Hermione asked quickly.

"Nothing much," Harry said. "I'd like to inspect the men I have in the alley, but other than that . . ."

"Why don't we get some ice cream?" Hermione asked quickly. "And I can get some books while you're busy."

"Sounds good," Harry agreed.

"Do you want to join us Tonks?" Hermione suddenly remembered the third person in the room.

"I'd love to," Tonks said with a smirk at the look on Hermione's face. "But I can't, I have to be on duty today. The first years are starting to trickle in and Madame Bones doesn't want anything to happen."

"I'll tell the men to keep their eyes open," Harry said. "Thanks Tonks."

"No problem Harry," the Auror replied. "Have fun you two."

"We will," Hermione said.

"Shall we?" Harry offered his arm.

"We shall," Hermione agreed. "Let's go Harry." Ignoring the grins on the soldier's faces, the two friends strolled out of the building and to the Leaky Cauldron.

"Afternoon Harry, Hermione." Tom said as they walked through the door.

"Hello Tom," Hermione said. "How are you doing today?"

"Can't complain," Tom replied. "Headed to the alley?"

"Yes we are," Harry said.

"Then I won't keep you, take care you two."

"We will Tom," Hermione agreed. "You wanna get some ice cream first Harry?"

"Sure," Harry agreed. "Just let me whisper something to the men at the entrance and we can go."

"Ok." They walked out the back of the tavern and were met by a pair of men.

"Good afternoon Major Potter," the men said with a salute.

"Good afternoon," Harry said as he returned the salute. "Bones is worried that the Tangos might try something when the new Hogwarts students so keep your eyes open."

"Yes sir," the men agreed. "Do you want us to pass it along?"

"Yes," Harry agreed. "Carry on."

"Yes sir."

"M'lady, shall we continue?"

"We shall." The pair made their way to Fortescue's shop and took seats at their table.

"Good to see you two here again," Fortescue said as he rushed to their table. "Would you like me to bring out your usual or would you like something else?"

"The usual is fine," Hermione said with a smile. "Thank you."

"Right away then," Fortescue said quickly. "It's good to have you two in the shop again."

"So do you really think there's going to be a death eater attack?"

"I think it's possible," Harry said. "Their only tactic is to spread as much terror as possible. Killing a few first years, especially muggle born first years would make sense."

"I guess so," Hermione agreed. "Do you think the war will ever be over?"

"I believe so," Harry said. "Like I said, their only tactic is to spread terror. They don't have enough people or professionalism to do anything else."

IIIIIIII

"You called for me?" The death eater asked.

"Yes," Lucius agreed. "Rejoice, our lord has chosen to grant you your fondest desire."

"Who does he want me to kill?"

"Nits make lice," Lucius said with a grin. "Kill as many muggle born as you can, especially the first years."

"What about the blood traitors?"

"Concentrate on the children," Lucius said after a moment of thought. "The younger the better, everything else is a bonus."

"Very well," the death eater agreed. "May I take reinforcements?"

"Take two men with you." Lucius began.

"Only two?"

"We're sending a few more teams," Lucius explained.

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"Meet you in the book store when you're done?" Hermione asked hopefully.

"Ok," Harry agreed. "I'll join you soon."

"Bye Harry," Hermine said as she walked away."

"Mundy," Harry ordered.

"I'll keep an eye on her sir," Mundy agreed.

Mundy shadowed the young girl as she walked up the street and watched as she walked into her favorite shop.

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Hermione came through the door and froze at the scene she came upon. Three death eaters had gathered everyone in the shop and were in the process of hexing the owner.

"Look what we have here?" One of the death eaters laughed. "Potter's mud blood bitch."

"Wonder how long she'll be able to entertain us before her mind shatters?" Another added.

Hermione's mind went to the hours of practice she'd put in and she reflexively drew her pistol and shot the first death eater in the stomach. She then swiveled and shot the man next to him first through the jaw and then through the forehead. Some part of her mind noted several distant cracks as the third man's head seemed to disappear. The world rushed back and Hermione stared down at what she'd done in horror.

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Mundy sighed in annoyance when Hermione walked into the shop ahead of him. Granted, the chances were that she'd be safe for the thirty seconds it took for him to join her in the shop, it still bothered his sense of professionalism. Three gunshots caused him to revise his opinion and he broke into a run.

Mundy drew as he crashed through the door, frantically looking for his charge.

"Av . . ." the death eater's incantation cut off as Mundy gave him two to the chest and one to the head. Another round found it's way into the screaming death eater on the ground.

"Are you alright Ms. Granger?" Mundy elbowed his way through the crowd, "Ms. Granger."

Hermione didn't answer and her eyes remained locked on the three bodies. "I did this," the girl whispered.

IIIIIIII

"How are things going McLain?" Harry asked as the two walked up the alley.

"Been quiet sir," McLain replied. "If every day was like this . . . you hear that sir?"

"Gunshots," Harry agreed as he began running towards the sound. Harry arrived in the book store and took everything in with a glance. "Mundy, what happened?"

"Death eaters sir," Mundy said. "Ms. Granger took the first two and I got the last one. She's . . . she's not taking it so well sir."

Harry slowly reached over and plucked the pistol out of Hermione's trembling fingers. "It's alright," Harry said gently. "You only did what you had to do to protect yourself."

"I just killed someone," Hermione wailed. "How do you think I feel? How am I supposed to feel?" The girl collapsed into Harry's arms and began sobbing.

"It's ok," Harry tried to comfort his friend. "Let it all out."

"Harry," Hermione sobbed.

"McLain," Harry's voice firmed. "I want the alley flooded, get as many men here as you can to make sure there aren't more of them."

"Yes sir," McLain agreed.

"Sir if I may suggest something?" Mundy asked.

"Speak."

"You should get Ms. Granger some place quiet," Mundy said gently. "To let her calm down."

"Do it sir," McLain agreed. "We can take care of things here."

"I'll be in my room at the Cauldron," Harry said reluctantly. "Get me if anyone so much as thinks something is going to happen."

"Yes sir," McLain agreed. "Mundy, go with them."

"Right McLain." Harry got his friend back to his room and did his best to comfort her until she fell asleep and after removing her shoes and loosening her clothing to make her more comfortable, crept out of the room.

"She ok sir?" Smythe asked in concern.

"Just a little shook up," Harry replied.

"Killing a man shouldn't be easy," Smythe muttered. The old man's eyes unfocused and he looked like he was in another place. "It should never be easy."

"You're right," Harry agreed. "It shouldn't."

"Meaning no offence to you sir," Smythe said quickly.

"Forget it," Harry said calmly. "I've never been normal, why should this be any different?"

"So what now sir?"

"Were there any other attacks?"

"Two more attempts sir."

"Prisoners?"

"The men weren't in any mood to take them after the attack on Hermione," Smythe replied.

"Try not to let that attitude continue," Harry said slowly. "I'm going to need a few for the trials, not to mention the information they can give."

"Trials?"

"We're going to break the insurgency and then we're going to have a trial," Harry explained. "We're going to keep everything above board, and then we're hang them by the numbers."

"Yes sir," Smythe agreed woodenly.

"You remember what I said about breaking the wizarding world?"

"Yes sir."

"This is part of it," Harry said to the expressionless NCO. "We need legitimacy if what we set up is going to last."

"I understand sir," Smythe said slowly. "But you'll understand if I say it isn't as satisfying as putting a bullet in myself."

"I know Sergeant Major," Harry said. "I know."

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"Albus," Minerva called out as she rushed into the Headmaster's office. "There's been an attack on Diagon Alley, Bones was right they're going after the children."

"How many?" Dumbledore asked tightly.

"Four in St. Mungos," McGonagall said with a relieved smile. "But we might not be so lucky next time."

"Why so few?" Dumbledore asked quickly. "How did we get so lucky?"

"Ms. Granger managed to stop the first group and Mr. Potter's men took care of the rest," Minerva said with a grin. "Albus . . . what would have happened if they weren't there?"

"I don't know Minerva," Albus replied. "But it's lucky they managed to drive them off."

"Drive them off?" Minerva blinked. "Albus, they weren't driven off. They were killed, Mr. Potter's men didn't take prisoners and from the reports I've gotten, neither does Ms. Granger."

"Minerva." Albus was scandalized. "How could you take such joy in anyone's death?"

"They were death eaters Albus," Minerva replied. "To compound matters, they tried to harm my children. Children that had done nothing wrong, true innocents."

"Yes but, isn't it a little . . ."

"Let the punishment fit the crime," McGonagall interrupted.

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"What?" Voldemort asked calmly.

"Dead my Lord," Lucius repeated himself. "All dead."

"How did this happen?"

"Potter's men," Lucius explained. "Along with every Auror the Ministry could gather."

"I see," the Dark Lord growled. "Tell me Lucius, how do you suppose we should address this insult?"

"Potter can't be everywhere," Lucius said with a shrug. "Find a few isolated muggle homes and give the families to the men for a bit of entertainment, send up the mark when we're done along with a message for Potter."

"Very good," Voldemort agreed. "See to it."

"Yes my Lord," Lucius agreed.

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"I want an interview with Potter on the front page tomorrow," the editor of the Prophet screamed. "I don't care how you get it."

"Might take making nice with the Lovegoods," one of the reporters said with a wince. "After what we printed last year."

"That was yesterday," the editor said with a dismissive wave. "I'm sure he's forgotten about it already and if he hasn't then just explain that that's the way the world works."

"Not sure if that'll work boss." The reporter insisted on digging his grave deeper. "Potter knows how to keep a grudge, you saw what he did to Fudge's approval ratings."

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Neville put on his uniform as soon as he got the news about what had happened in the alley. "Gotta report in Gran," Neville explained to the stoic matron of the Longbottom family. "There's no way Harry's going to let them get away with this."

"But you still have a bit more time before you're supposed to go in," his gran protested weakly.

"It's my duty gran," Neville said tightly.

"Let me take a look at you then," she demanded. "Just like your grandfather he'd be . . . he's proud of you, you know that don't you. Just . . . just promise me that you'll be careful."

"I promise gran," Neville agreed.

AN: Thanks go to Ed for one of the lines in this chapter. He took what I wrote and turned into what I wanted to write.

Seeing the Elephant

"Harry," Tonks called out as she walked into the Cauldron. "I just heard what happened. Where's Hermione, is she alright?"

"She's a bit shook up over what happened," Harry said. "She's asleep right now."

"Why aren't you sitting with her?" Tonks growled.

"Because I have a job to do," Harry replied calmly. "Though I would appreciate it if you sat with her, I'd rather she not be left alone right now."

"Fine," Tonks spat. The Auror's hair shifted into several colors as she stormed up the stairs. "Outta my way," she snapped at the man in front of the door.

"I don't think so." Mundy pulled a lethal looking sub machine gun out from under his jacket and pointed it at the young Auror. "One more step, one sudden move and you're dead."

"I'm just here to sit with Hermione," Tonks said slowly. "I'm not here to hurt her."

"I don't know you," Mundy said simply. "The Major ordered me to watch her while he was gone and no one is getting through this door without his orders while I'm alive."

"Harry told me to sit with her," Tonks said.

"Didn't tell me."

"Let her in Mundy." Tonks jumped at the voice that appeared behind her.

"You sure McLain?" Mundy eyed Tonks suspiciously.

"She's the other guard," McLain explained. "Major trusts her and thought a female on close protection might make Ms. Granger feel more comfortable."

"Fine," Mundy agreed. Tonks sighed in relief as the scary man lowered his weapon.

"So . . . can I go in then?" She asked nervously.

"Yeah . . . go in," Mundy agreed.

"Don't mind him," McLain said as he led Tonks towards the door. "He's just a bit upset that Ms. Granger got attacked on his watch."

"Oh." Tonks walked into the room to find Hermione sitting in the dark. "Hermione?"

"Tonks?" Hermione asked. "Is that you?"

"Yeah, it's me."

"Where's Harry?"

"He's . . ." Tonks tried to think of an excuse that would placate the melancholy girl.

"Downstairs planning his next move," McLain said. "He isn't taking what happened very well."

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked. "Nothing happened to him."

"He wasn't able to protect you," McLain explained. "And he's taking that . . . he should be ok soon ma'am."

"It's really that bad?" Hermione's concern for Harry overriding her own depression.

"He went from sitting with you to upping the schedule," McLain said. "And he's also increasing the scale. Rather than a limited raid, he's going to take the whole thing."

"Do we have enough men to do that?"

"Plenty," McLain agreed. "Normally you don't want to attack unless you have at least three to one in favor. Assuming that every adult in the alley is a hostile, we have about two to one in favor."

"You said you'd normally be worried about that?" Tonks prompted.

"Ever heard of the term 'force multiplier?'" McLain asked. "It means one of ours is worth one and a half of theirs . . . or two, or five, or whatever. It isn't a boast, it's a recognition of the fact that better training and equipment will make soldiers more effective. Not to mention the fact that two to one is the worst case, Major thinks that we'll have three or as much as four to one. He thinks that most of them will be friendly or neutral."

"Can you give us any more details?" Hermione said.

"I think the Major wanted to keep it close to his vest," McLain said with a glance at the young Auror. "I can tell you he's named it 'Operation: March to The Sea.'"

Hermione's mouth formed an 'oh.' "As in Sherman?"

"On the nose ma'am."

IIIIIIIIII

"I'm here Harry," Neville called out as he came through the fireplace. "When do we attack?"

"Have a seat Neville," Harry replied. "We're just discussing that."

"Hermione's ok isn't she?" Neville asked as he took his seat.

"Shook up but fine," Harry replied. "I have Tonks with her right now."

"Good."

"Now the main thing is that I don't want anyone to escape . . ." Harry cut off when he noticed Tom approaching.

"Get you something to drink Mr. Longbottom?" Tom asked with more respect than Neville could remember hearing directed towards himself before.

"Anything wet," Neville replied. "Thank you Tom."

"A pleasure to serve anyone in that uniform," Tom said proudly. "Might I ask you a question Major Potter?"

"What is it Tom?"

"Why aren't you more angry about what happened to Ms. Granger?" Tom asked. "You just seem too calm . . . no disrespect intended of course."

"You don't get angry at a dog when it messes on your carpet," Harry said slowly. "You thump to let it know you're angry and rub his nose in it so he knows what he did. Anger just makes you sloppy and makes you do things you'd regret later."

"So you're just going to . . . show them the error of their ways?"

"I'm going to give a measured response," Harry said. "They need to learn that there are consequences to their actions and that I will respond in kind to any attack they make."

"I think I understand," Tom agreed. "I'll have drinks out soon."

"Thank you Tom."

"So we're going to burn Knockturn then?" Neville asked eagerly.

"If we have to," Harry agreed. "I'd rather it not come to that, but if they don't want to admit that they're outclassed . . ."

"Then they deserve what they get," Neville said savagely.

"Get the scouts and the magical support into place," Harry whispered to one of the messengers. "Have them keep out of sight until I give the order."

"Yes sir."

IIIIIIII

Later that night, the people of the wizarding world were shocked out of their normal complacency by a report crackling over their wizarding wireless sets.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt your regularly scheduled programming for a special news bulletin." All around the United Kingdom, families gathered around their Wireless. "As I speak, forces under the command of Major Harry Potter are assaulting death eater positions in Knockturn Alley. We now go to Special Correspondent Michael Redshirt already on the scene."

"Thanks Tom. I'm standing at the entrance of Knockturn alley with Major Harry James Potter, commander of the 95th rifles. Major Potter, could you explain to our viewers why you've decided to invade Knockturn Alley?"

"I'd hardly call it an invasion," Harry's voice replied. "For too long, Knockturn Alley has been seen as a haven for dark wizards by both sides. People forget that the majority of Knockturn alley is no different then Diagon, made up of decent folks that just want to live their lives. Our presence here is no different then our difference in Diagon, we're making this place safe for decent people again."

"But what do you say . . . "

"Get down," Harry's voice yelled. "McLain, get me that sniper."

"Major Potter has just saved me from a curse that came out of one of the upper stories," the reporter whispered into his microphone. "His men are urk . . ."

"Michael . . . Michael are you there?"

"Your man just took a spell to the face," Harry's voice came over the wireless. "I'm having him sent to the aid station."

"Major Potter wait," Tom said quickly. "Is there anything else you'd like to say?"

"Not at this time," Harry replied. "I have a battle to win." Harry dropped the microphone and turned back to the task at hand. "Get those people to the rear . . . no take their wands first and sort through them, you wouldn't let them keep pistols would you. Think Neville."

"Sorry Harry," Neville said with a blush. "You heard him men."

"What are you doing with us?" A woman pulled her children close.

"Just escorting you to a safe place," Neville assured her. "If you aren't death eaters then we'll allow you to come back here when you're finished."

"How are you going to check us?" The woman asked.

"Pull up your sleeve," Neville ordered. "See . . . bare skin."

"Oh . . . am I free to go?"

"We'd like you to speak with a few people first," Neville said. "And we have our healers on hand to give everyone a look over."

"Healers?" The woman asked hopefully. "Real Healers?"

"Real Healers," Neville confirmed.

"Could they take a look at Holly here?" The woman asked hopefully. "She's had a bit of a cough lately and I haven't had enough Galleons to . . ."

"Jones," Neville called out. "Escort this lady to the Healers and have them take care of that cough."

"Yes sir," Jones agreed. "This way ma'am."

|||||||

"Albus," Minerva caught the Headmaster on his way out of the school. "Where are you going?"

"Knockturn Alley," Dumbledore replied. "I have to get there before it's too late."

"Albus make sense," Minerva demanded. "Too late for what?"

"Knockturn has started fighting back," Dumbledore replied. "But I don't think it's too late stop things before they go out of control."

"Albus . . ."

"They're not going to let Harry just march into Knockturn Alley and take over," Dumbledore went on. "They're going to fight back, and everyone that went in with Harry is going to die."

"Show the boy some credit," Minerva snapped. "You saw how he dealt with the death eaters before."

"I saw how he was able to kill a couple groups of misguided children out on a lark," Dumbledore said hotly. "He doesn't have any idea of what it's like to deal with the real thing. Get out of the way Minerva."

|||||||

Neville's detachment rounded a building and began taking fire from a large group of death eaters. "What do we do sir?" One of the men demanded. "Sir, what do we do?"

Neville didn't know what as the spells flew past, so he tried to think of what his commander's actions would be in a similar situation. Grabbing the flag from the dead color guard, Neville turned to his men. "Follow me," he called out as he charged towards the group of death eaters. The men cheered as the followed their commander into

the group of surprised dark wizards. Spells and bayonets flashed in several seconds of brutal fighting.

"You ok sir?"

"Who'd we lose?" Neville ignored the question.

"Smith and Hogue," the man replied. "Three more wounded. Sir, your arm."

Neville looked down and noticed the wound for the first time. "Damn," Neville hissed as he watched the line of black move up his arm. "Cut it off."

"Excuse me sir?" The young soldier asked nervously. Neville took off his belt and wrapped it tightly around his arm below the elbow. The man watched in shock as Neville pulled out his wand and placed the tip of his wand on the junction of his wrist. "Sir you aren't going to . . ." The young man watched in shock as Neville cast a cutting curse.

"Withering charm," Neville managed to say through clenched teeth. "Would have spread to the entire body if I hadn't cut it out."

"Isn't there a way the healers could have stopped it?" The soldier asked faintly.

"I don't have time for that," Neville growled. "Now help me up and get me my sword."

IIIIIIIIII

"Leutent Longbottom cleared out a group in sector fourteen," Smythe said to Harry. "Two dead and several wounded."

"And on the other side?"

"All dead," Smythe said. "It got down to bayonets."

"Anything else?"

"They're making their stand in a bar at the end of the street,," Smythe said. "What do you want us to do about that sir?"

"We've cleared out everything else?"

"Yes sir," Smythe agreed.

"Break out the Gustovs," Harry ordered after a moment of thought. "Volley fire until there's nothing left."

"Yes sir."

"Keep them out of sight if possible," Harry added. "I'd rather they don't have any idea of what we did."

"Right sir."

"Harry," Dumbledore arrived with a pop. "Thank god I got here in time, you have to get out of here before . . ." Dumbledore trailed off as a building at the end of the street disappeared with a large bang. "What just happened?"

"Resistance just ended," Harry said calmly. "Was there something you wanted?"

"How?" Dumbledore said in shock. "How were you able to . . ."

"If you don't have anything important for me then I'm going to have to ask you to leave," Harry interrupted. "This is still a closed area until we can make sure it's safe enough for civilians again."

"Harry . . ."

"McLain," Harry raised his voice. "Escort Mr. Dumbledore to Diagon Alley and have the Healers look over him."

"Yes sir." A surprisingly docile Dumbledore allowed himself to be led away.

"Sir," Smythe said as he walked up. "The Alley belongs to you, all resistance has been ended."

"What's the butcher's bill?" Harry asked with a sigh.

"Fifty dead on their side," Smythe began. "Twelve on ours, five civilians, and another ten unknowns. We also been finding several old bodies ranging from one week to one hundred years old."

"I did this," Harry whispered. "This is all my fault."

"It's your responsibility sir," Smythe disagreed. "There's a difference, your job is to plan, to see to it that you loose as few men as possible."

"I know but," Harry paused. "But they didn't have to be here, I could have . . ."

"Do you know what hell is Major?" The old solder asked, "hell is being condemned to rot away. Hell is to spend the rest of your life rotting into uselessness . . . I know what hell is. No man here regrets his choice to join you. To die in battle with our brothers . . . to die with our brothers in a noble cause rather than to continue our sentence in hell is a gift that none of us will ever be able to repay. Do not mourn their deaths, celebrate their release for no matter what the future holds they will never go back to the rotting hell. We have a saying that when we die and go to be judged." Smythe added. The old man looked at Harry and smiled. "When we arrive, we'll announce ourselves with one more soldier reporting sir, I've spent my time in hell. He spent his time in hell sir and he died on his feet like a man, he's one of the lucky ones."

"Thank you Sergeant Major," Harry said softly.

"S' my job sir," Smythe replied.

AN: The Karl Gustav is a recoilless rifle and that is what was used to destroy a building. It's made by Saab Bofors, a Swedish company. They first started making them about fifty years ago after World War II which puts it on the edge of the tech level I want to use.

Neville 'Lefty' Longbottom

"Wake up Neville." Neville awoke to find Susan Bones looking down at him.

"Hey Susan," Neville said. "What are you doing here?"

"My Aunt suggested that me and a few friends visit the wounded soldiers," Susan explained. "I was surprised to find you here."

"Didn't know I'd joined huh?" Neville asked.

"No I didn't," Susan agreed.

"The Doctor tell you when I could leave?" Neville asked.

"I can't believe you cut off your own arm," Susan said suddenly. "You could have just come in for the counter curse."

"Takes two days to get that done," Neville retorted. "And I didn't have time for that. Besides, I didn't take off much of my arm . . . may as well say it was just my hand."

"That's a big improvement," Susan said hotly. "You're going to be without your hand for the rest of your life."

"It's not so bad," Neville defended himself. "I'm told that a hook can be more useful than a hand in some circumstances . . . good at opening bottles. It'll make drinking Butter Bear more convenient anyway."

"You don't know?" Susan asked incredulously.

"Don't know what?"

"Doctor Harper has been experimenting with new replacements," Susan explained. "The new ones are just as good as what they replace . . . you . . . you really didn't know?"

"I . . ." Neville was saved from answering by the appearance of McLain.

"Afternoon Ms. Bones," McLain said with a grin. "You know when you're ready to come back Lefty?"

"Lefty?"

"Here," McLain tossed the latest issue of 'Teen Witch Weekly' onto Neville's bed.

IIIIIIIIII

"Harry," Hermione said with a voice tinged with humor. "Listen to this."

"Are you reading Teen Witch?" Harry asked incredulously.

"This issue is filled with lot's of news, both good and bad." Hermione read, ignoring her friend. "Harry Potter, the wizarding world's most dreamy wizard has been taken by his long time friend Hermione Granger . . ."

"Is there a point to this Hermione?" Harry demanded.

"But all is not lost girls," Hermione continued. "We still have Neville 'Lefty' Longbottom, the hero of Knockturn Alley."

"Neville?" Harry said in shock. "Lefty?"

"Our sources reveal . . . reveal." Hermione dissolved into giggles.

"Poor bastard," Harry said. "Better him than me."

"Harry," Hermione said with a mock glare. "Don't be jealous of Lefty."

"Has anyone told Neville about this?" Harry asked.

"I think McLain won the coin toss," Hermione replied. They both looked up at a knock on the door.

"Enter," Harry called out.

"It's me Major," Smythe announced himself. "General send word that he'd like to meet with you."

"You know what's it's about?" Harry asked.

"Death eaters hit a couple houses," Smythe replied. "And they left a message for you."

"What did they say?"

"You can't protect them all Potter," Smythe recited from memory. "At a guess, the General wants to know what you're going to do about it."

"We know why they picked those houses?" Hermione entered the conversation. "Did they have any connection to the wizarding world?"

"Looks like they were chosen randomly," Smythe replied.

"We have enough men to," Harry's voice took on an odd tone, "keep up the skeer?"

"Not unless we strip the school," Smythe said after a moment of thought. "And even then it would make things difficult if we ran into any trouble."

"We need to knock them all down before they know what's happening," Harry sighed. "We loose surprise then things are going to get much more difficult."

"I might have a place to get a few more men," Smythe said slowly. "No promises, but I think they'll be interested."

"Who?"

"Tough little mountain bastards," Smythe replied with a happy smile. "And McLain might be able to recruit a few of the ladies from hell."

"Right . . . you want to come with me Hermione?"

"I . . ."

"Rather she come with me if that's alright with you Major," Smythe interrupted.

"Why?" Hermione asked.

"I wouldn't want to deprive a gastronome like you from trying something new," Smythe said fondly. "And I also think it might be a good time for you to get your feet wet."

"Your choice Hermione," Harry offered.

"You go ahead Harry."

"It's settled then," Harry agreed. "The General send a car?"

"Downstairs," Smythe agreed.

"So where are we going?" Hermione asked after Harry had left the room.

"Ever eaten chhwela?" Smythe asked with a smile. "Or drunk lassi?"

"No," Hermione said with a smile. "Where is it from?"

"Nepal."

|||||||

"Sorry to bother you with this Major," the General said. "But that's the situation. Like it or not, the politicos are sticking their noses in and demanding that something get done."

"I understand General," Harry agreed wearily. "Given enough time I can stop this."

"Ask me for anything but time," the General said with a laugh. "Maybe I can help, what are your plans Major?"

"I'd like to hit several targets at once, or in rapid succession at worst." Harry answered. "Unfortunately, I don't have enough men to do that and keep up my current commitments at the same time."

"Would more injured men help?" The General asked. "Mundy and the others are working out aren't they?"

"In the long term yes," Harry agreed. "The problem is that it takes a while to familiarise the new men with the magical world."

"Not using them the way they're intended to be used then?"

"Not until they learn enough to get by," Harry agreed. "Mundy gets used for a few things. The rest of them are exclusively trainers and replacements at the moment. I figured that it was better to put them with experienced men for the time being."

"Sensible," the General said after a moment of thought. "If you could get more men with experience in the magical world, would you take them?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"A company or two would be wonderful," Harry said after a moment of thought. "More would be great, but I could get by with two more companies."

"Why so few?"

"My Sergeant Major is looking to get a few men right now," Harry replied. "And another of my Sergeants is looking into recruiting a few more."

"Mind if I ask who they think they'll find in England?"

"Smythe said something about tough little bastards from the hills," Harry replied. "And McLain mentioned the Ladies From Hell."

"I understand," the General said with a smile. "Anything else?"

"Air support might be useful in the future too," Harry agreed. "If the other side is as incompetent as I hope they are."

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"So what did you want you old bastard?" The short man asked with a neutral look on his face.

"Come on Paneru, can't I just come here to introduce my lovely granddaughter to the joys of your countries cuisine?" Smythe replied innocently.

"No."

"How many years were you in before you retired?"

"Thirty," Paneru replied. "Why?"

"Care to put in a few more?"

"Maybe," Paneru said slowly. "Why are you coming to me?"

"You know about my family don't you?"

"What about it?"

"Show him your wand Hon," Smythe ordered.

"I see," Paneru said with a nod. "What's that have to do with me?"

"They've got a group of terrorists bothering them," Smythe said. "And it's spilled into the non-magical world. We've been given the task of ending the insurgency and restoring order."

"Pay?"

"Good."

"I might be able to get thirty men together," Paneru said slowly. "But that's only if your side can provide transportation."

"Only thirty?"

"You have time for me to train new men?"

"Just asking," Smythe said. "Now that we've got that out of the way, it's time for more important things."

"Like what?" Paneru asked suspiciously.

"Tell him what you want to eat Honey," Smythe said to his lovely granddaughter. "And speak slowly, he's not too bright and his hearing is going out."

"For that," Paneru said to Smythe. "I'll spit in your food." He turned to Hermione, "yours is safe. What would you like?"

"Whatever you recommend," Hermione replied. "I've never eaten any of it before."

IIIIIIII

"So did you have a nice visit at the hospital?" Madame Bones asked her niece.

"I did aunty," Susan agreed. "Spent most of my time talking to Neville Longbottom."

"Frank and Alice's boy?" She had to resist the urge to smirk, she loved it when a plan came together.

"That's him," Susan agreed. "Did you know that he joined the army?"

"I may have heard something along those lines," Madame Bones agreed. "What was he in for?"

"He got hit by a withering charm," Susan said. "So he cut off his hand, can you believe that?"

"Sounds like he takes after his grandfather," Madame Bones said with a smile.

"You knew him?"

"He was a senior Auror when I joined," Madame Bones said with a wave. "Damn good man too."

"Oh . . . so I was wondering." Susan licked her lips nervously. "Would it be alright if I stayed out late today?"

"Want to spend some time at Hannah's house then?"

"No, the Doctor said it would be good for Neville's recovery if he were to spend some time out of the hospital." Susan said in a rush. "And since you said that we should support them . . ."

"Take as long as you like," Madame Bones agreed. "The main reason I want you home so early is because it's relatively safe here. I don't suppose you'll be in any danger if you're being escorted by our young hero."

"I'm sure you're right aunty," Susan said.

"Where did you plan to go?"

"Dinner at the Cauldron and ice cream after maybe?" Susan said with a shrug. "I hadn't thought about it much."

"Why don't you get ready and I can set things up for you?" Madame Bones suggested. Carefully not mentioning the fact that it would allow her to arrange a bit of security before hand.

"Thanks aunty," Susan agreed quickly.

Madame Bones smiled as she watched her niece bounce out of the room. "Now how to convince Moody that he needs eat out today . . ." Bones mused. "I suppose I could just come out and tell him why, but where would be the fun in that?"

IIIIIIIIII

"Ms. Granger," a large man greeted Hermione as she cam into the Cauldron. "Might I have a moment of your time?"

"What can I do for you?" Hermione asked.

"I just wanted to thank you," the man said. "For saving my wife and son. I . . . they're all I have, I don't know what I would have done without them."

"You're welcome," Hermione said. "But when did I do that?"

"In the book store," the man replied. "I . . . my son has nightmares about it. My wife too, but they said that you come in and save them every time. I . . . just thank you, if there is anything I can ever do for you then just ask."

"Thank you lad," Smythe said for his speechless granddaughter. "You go upstairs and wait for Harry," He said to his trembling granddaughter. "Ok hon."

"Ok," Hermione said weakly.

"She's been having a rough time of it," Smythe said conversationally.

"Poor kid," the other man said. "Shouldn't have to deal with this sort of thing."

"No she shouldn't."

"Almost pulled my boy out of school because of it," the man continued. "Was in the middle of a big row about it when he said that she'd saved him before and she'd save him again. It's . . . I guess it's not easy to be a hero."

"Sergeant Major Smythe," the old man held out his hand.

"Chief Constable Hartley," the other man replied as they shook hands. "Good to meet you."

"Speaking out of school," Smythe said in a low voice. "Would you like to get a bit of unofficial pay back?"

"I don't want to break any laws," Hartley said quickly.

"I think I could convince the Major to give it his blessing," Smythe replied.

"What's the deal?"

"Be nice to have a few more people that know how to ferret out hidden places," Smythe said slowly. "We might have few houses in need of being searched soon."

"Easiest way is to sweat it out of the people that hid things in the first place."

"We may not have that option."

"Be happy to help then," Hartley agreed.

AN: If you don't know who Smythe and McLain are recruiting then google the words 'Black Watch' and "Gurkha."

Omake: What McLain did before Harry recruited him . . .

"Right," McLain's voice oozed disdain. "You lot are the dumbest bunch of gutter scrapings I could ever have the misfortune of finding. You remember what your mission is or did you forget that too?"

"Sell . . . girl guide biscuits?" One of the trembling little girls asked nervously.

"Yeah," McLain agreed. "But what do you do if they say no?"

"Put a bit of brick in a sock and hit them with it?" One of the more confident girls replied. "And then take their wallet?"

"Then?" McLain prompted.

"Cut 'em?" The girl said uncertainty. "And tell 'em that it'll 'appen gain if dey don't pay up?"

"That's my girl," McLain said proudly.

"Thanks grandpa."

One hour later . . .

"Would you like to buy some girl guide cookies?"

"Well aren't you just ooof."

"I thought you were only supposed to do that if he said no?"

"This way we get the wallet and we can keep the cookies," McLain's granddaughter explained. "I just thought of it."

"Oh," the other girl said in understanding. "Good idea."

ANZACs, Canuks, the AVG, Gurkhas, and Scots

"Is your hand bothering you?" Susan asked in concern. "Everything ok?"

"I'm fine," Neville reassured his date. "It's just a little strange getting used to it."

"I bet," Susan purred. "Let me see it."

"Ok," Neville agreed slowly. "Why?"

"I just want to look at it," Susan lied. "So what are your hobbies?"

"I've always been fond of Herbology," Neville replied. "What about you?"

"Well . . ."

Moody smiled as he watched his grandson work, he couldn't be prouder of the boy. First the boy proved himself to be a chip off the old block and now the little bugger was seducing Madame Bones's niece. "Good on ye lad," Moody muttered to himself. "Now all I have to do is figure out what to do with you, thought you'd disturb the boy's date would you?"

"Mumph," the gagged death eater gurgled in fear.

IIIIIIIIII

"We can't allow Potter to continue," Fudge whined. "If he gets too popular then he could threaten my position after the war is over. The last thing we need is another bloody Dumbledore."

"I wouldn't worry too much Minister," a man said with an oily voice. "The boy has shown no intrest in power. It's likely that he'll live out the rest of his life playing with those soldiers of his . . . that is unless he chooses to go muggle."

"But what about the poor?" The Minister spat the last word. "Since he took Knockturn the damned poor have been singing his praises."

"Not surprising considering the fact that he had his healers go over each one of the children," the man agreed. "Or that he's whisked several of them off to new housing."

"What should we do about it?"

"Nothing," the man shrugged. "The underclasses aren't important in the grand scheme of things. So long as you hold the purebloods, then you're safe."

"I still don't like it."

"Do you know what the public likes more than a hero Minister?"

"What?" Fudge snapped.

"They like to see him fall, to watch his gold turn to brass." The man said with a smile. "If he gets too troublesome then we drag out his secrets and destroy him. In the mean time, why don't you send a memo to a few . . . reliable people in the ministry. State your worries that Potter was a bit too brutal in his treatment of Knockturn and send similar memos every time Potter does something similar."

"Why should I do that?" Fudge demanded. "What good will it do?"

"Have you forgotten how Crouch fell?" The man sighed, he was often tempted to just imperio the fool and be done with it. Would certainly save time anyway.

"Oh," Fudge agreed. "I understand."

"Good," the man purred. "In the mean time, stay out of the boy's way and do nothing. I'll take care of the details."

IIIIIIII

"Might be a good idea to clear a few hours Major," Smythe suggested. "For the surprise."

"What surprise?" Harry asked with a frown.

"Wouldn't want to spoil it sir," Smythe replied. "But it's be best to be prepared . . . could also be a good idea to take that lovely granddaughter of mine to tour the village. They've made a lot of improvements and you may wish to give your blessings for people to start moving in."

"Will Blake be there?"

"Daphne might have mentioned her intention to be there," Smythe agreed.

"Daphne?"

"I may be old, but I'm not dead." Smythe laughed. "And I always did like them a bit younger."

"Everyone's younger then you Sergeant Major," Harry retorted. "I'll be there after I can round up Hermione."

"Thank you sir."

Harry put his paperwork away and went off in search of his friend. After a few minutes of looking, he found her reclining by one of the windows with a book cradled in her hand.

"Get up you lazy witch," Harry said to his friend. "We have things to do and places to be."

"We do?" Hermione looked up with a smile. "The surprise is ready then?"

"How do you know about it?" Harry asked suspiciously.

"It's my job to know these things," Hermione said with an arrogant smile. "And no, I'm not going to tell you what it is."

"It's also your job to keep me informed," Harry replied with a grin.

"Need to know Harry, need to know."

"Fine," Harry agreed. "Let's go."

"Give me a sec," Hermione begged. "I just want to get to the end of this chapter."

"Fine." Harry pushed his friend's feet out of the way and took a seat. After a few minutes of reading, Hermione carefully marked her spot and closed the book. "Ready?"

"Yeah, let's go." Harry gave his friend a hand up and they walked through the door to the village.

"Sergeant Major Bly, Petty Officer Hooke," Harry greeted the two men as he entered the village. "Was there some reason you were waiting for me?"

"Eager to show you the improvements sir," Bly said. "Eh' Hooke?"

"Would also like you to take a look at the power station we've set up," Hooke agreed.

"Well let's go take a look then," Harry said.

"This way sir," Bly suggested. "As you can see, most of the buildings are made of stone and they've held up surprisingly well to fifty years of neglect."

"So what have you had to do to make the place livable again?" Hermione asked.

"We've had to gut the interior of several of the buildings," Bly sighed. "We've saved what we could but . . ."

"Go on."

"Other than that it was mostly upgrading the plumbing and electricity," Bly continued. "Now it's just a matter of landscaping and having Ms. Blake's people put in the wards and charms."

"What are they putting in?" Harry asked mildly.

"Enlarging the spaces mostly," Bly replied. "Working it so the electricity doesn't come into conflict with the wards is the other major thing. We figure that we still have another week of work before everything is finished, but we can start moving people in now if you approve. Several of the workers have expressed an interest in having their family moved here."

"Granted," Harry said immediately. "Do we have enough space for everyone?"

"That's another thing I wanted to speak with you about sir," Bly said. "My boys are here with nothing to do so I was hoping we could put up a few more buildings. We've got plenty of stone and . . ."

"Do it," Harry agreed. "Anything else?"

"Right this way sir," Hooke said eagerly. "See that dam over there?"

"Yeah," Harry agreed.

"It used to be a mill pond but we're using it to supply some of the electricity," Hooke said with a smile. "We have a generator hooked up to the water wheel."

"Will that provide enough power?" Hermione asked with a frown.

"Not alone," Hooke said. "We also have a steam generator, but most of our energy comes from a bit of spell work one of the new men came up with."

"How does it work?" Hermione demanded.

"Not completely clear on that myself," Hooke admitted with a blush. "All I know is that the charms keep the turbine spinning. I could have them send you the technical stuff if you'd like."

"Thank you, that would be nice."

"I understand the normal stuff," Hooke said quickly. "But the magic is a bit beyond me."

"You've done a wonderful job here Hooke," Harry said firmly. "Both of you have done wonders."

"Thank you sir," the two NCOs said quickly.

"Bly, along with the new buildings." Harry began.

"Yes sir?"

"I've got another job I need you to do, get with Smythe for the details."

"Got it sir."

"Good."

"Fancy meeting you here sir," Smythe said as he approached.

"Speak of the devil and the devil shall appear," Hermione said with a smile.

"What can I do for you Sergeant Major?" Harry said innocently.

"Might be a good idea to wander back to the barracks," Smythe suggested. "There are some things that require your attention."

"Wouldn't want to keep them waiting," Harry agreed. "Let's go." Smythe led the group back towards the parade ground and Harry froze when he caught sight of what awaited him. "Gods . . . where did you find them all?"

"I managed to scrape up thirty Gurkha," Smythe replied. "And McLain got another fifty men, the ones in skirts."

"And the rest?"

"The general came through for you sir," Smythe said with a grin. "A company each of Canadians and ANZACs."

"Are they ready for action?"

"Might want to ask their commanders sir," Smythe said with a cough.

"Right," Harry said with a shake. Harry walked up to the commander of the nearest formation. "What's your name Captain?"

"Captain Shawn Finn, commander of Alpha Two Five, First Special Services Force."

"What have you got for me?" Harry asked eagerly.

"I have one hundred men to add to your command Major," the young Canadian said with a smile. "About half of them Americans."

"Why did you bring Americans?" Harry asked quickly.

"Americans and Canadians have a history of fighting each other's wars," the man explained. "Many Americans fought in Canadian units before the United States officially joined the first Great War and they did the same in World War II and many Canadians joined the US military during Vietnam. We're siblings, you can't fight one of us without fighting us both."

"Good, when will you be ready to commence operations against the enemy?"

"Immediately sir," Captain Finn replied.

"Good, I . . . wait," Harry said with a frown. "I just saw a goblin in with your men."

"I'm sure you didn't sir," the Canadian Captain said quickly. "That would be a violation of several treaties so I can assure you that there are no goblins in my unit."

Harry just walked up to the soldier in question. "Name?"

"Private Bloodstomper sir," the goblin said.

"Where you from troop?"

"Canada sir," the goblin replied quickly. "And I assure you that I am not a goblin."

"I see." Harry looked at the man to the goblin's left and at the man to the goblin's right. "So you're trying to tell me that you're a typical Canadian?"

"Yes sir," the goblin agreed.

"You don't see anything odd here Captain?"

"Nothing odd here sir."

"Good enough for me," Harry said. "Carry on men."

"Yes sir."

"Let's go take a look at the other new men," Harry said to his Sergeant Major. "I wanna have a meeting a few hours after that."

"Yes sir," Smythe agreed.

"Good to meet you Captain . . ."

"Bruce Hart," the man replied. "Australian Army."

"What have you got for me?"

"Two platoons of Diggers and another of Kiwis," the Australian said with a smile. "Ready to kick ass as soon as you say the word."

"Excellent," Harry said with a grin. "Good to have you aboard."

"Three more groups to see sir," Smythe prompted. "And we're going to have to hurry if we want to have the planning session before dark."

"Right," Harry agreed. "Excuse me Captain."

"Major Potter," Smythe began. "Let me introduce you to my good friend Paneru. Former Warrant who was good enough to come back with a few friends of his."

"Glad to be here with you Major," Paneru said with a grin. "It's good to be back in a uniform again."

"Welcome aboard," Harry said. "Smythe says you're the best and I'm glad to have you."

"Thank you sir."

"Got a special job for you if you're interested," Harry continued. "We'll talk later."

"Yes sir."

"Come on Smythe," Harry said happily. "This is just like Christmas."

"Thought you'd feel like that sir," Smythe agreed.

"Sergeant Major Davidson," the man at the head of the sottish formation said as Harry approached. "Ready to serve as soon as you give the word sir."

"Excellent," Harry said. "Glad to have you with us Sergeant Major."

"Glad to be here sir."

"What else Sergeant Major?" Harry asked as they walked to the next group.

"Handful of Americans sir."

"Americans?" Harry asked in shock.

"Military observer and a couple pilots," Smythe said with a shrug.

"Let's go have a look at them then."

"Major Wood," the American officer held out a hand. "Good to meet you Major Potter."

"What can I do for you Major Wood?"

"Officially I'm here to observe only. Sorry Major but the politicians say that this is an internal matter and the gutless bastards won't let us do our job" The man said with a grin. "Unofficially, I have several men that just happen to be vacationing in the area." The Major said with a grin, "each one of them a one whiskey or two whiskey."

"One Whiskey?" Harry asked. "Two Whiskey?"

"The US Army has an additional skill modifier of one through three whiskey for the magically adept," Major Wood explained. "Depending on strength, I believe you'd call a one whiskey a squib here."

"Interesting," Harry mused.

"Why don't you spend a year with us to see how we do things after you've got things wrapped up here?"

"Sounds like a good idea," Harry agreed.

"Sorry to interrupt," another man said. "But I wouldn't want Major Potter to leave without hearing about what I've got to offer."

"Sorry about that Eddie," Major Wood replied. "Major Potter, allow me to introduce Major Eddie Rickenbacker, American Volunteer Group."

"Major."

"Major."

"So what have you got for me Major?"

"Close air support," Major Rickenbacker replied. "You give the word and I'll turn a little piece of land into a charnel house . . . unofficially of course. Officially all I can do is give a demonstration of what my planes can do."

"What kind of planes?"

"Well," Major Rickenbacker began. "Few people wanted to bring some of the old aircraft, said we owed it to ourselves to remain true to our history."

"And?"

"And while it would have been nice, it wouldn't be practical." The Pilot explained, "for one thing none of us are rated on the P-40. For another . . . well, do you know how hard it would be to drum up enough aircraft?"

"Very?"

"Frigging Texas Air Force wouldn't let us have their planes, bastards wanted to come themselves and leave us out of it."

"Oh."

"So we brought our current inventory," Major Rickenbacker said with an evil grin.

AN: A nod to nonjon in this chapter.

Omake: First Aid Practice . . .

"You lot haven't been slacking off while I've been away 'ave you?" McLain growled.

"No Sergeant McLain," the girl guides replied together.

"Really," McLain purred. "Then maybe you could explain these bandages I see on your little arms."

"We're practicing first aid," one of the girls replied.

"Good . . . so how badly did you get cut then?"

"We're just practicing grandpa," one of the little girls protested.

"No, that's not the way things work in this troop." McLain said in disappointment. "Come with me girls."

"Where are we going grandpa?"

"To the boy scout camp across the way," McLain replied. "We're going to address the remarks they made about you when they walked by a few minutes ago and then we're gonna have all the first aid practicing you can take."

"So I should bring my knife then?" The little girl asked innocently.

"You should always bring your knife hon."

"Even on dates?"

"What dates?" McLain asked suspiciously.

"When I get older," the little girl explained.

"Oh, especially on dates."

Total War

"A toast," Smythe said. "To our gallant allies."

"TO OUR GALLANT ALLIES," everyone repeated as they brought the glass to their lips.

"To Major Potter," Captain Finn announced. "For being kind enough to invite us all to the party."

"FOR INVITING US ALL TO THE PARTY."

"Now that we all know each other," Harry said with a grin. "Let's get down to business." He cut off as Hermione came through the door.

"Harry," Hermione walked into the meeting with a stricken look on her face.

"What is it?" Harry asked gently.

"The Death Eaters have attacked again," Hermione said looking close to tears.

"Go on."

"This time they hit a family of five," Hermione said. "One of the children was alive when the Police arrived . . . she died on the way to the hospital. She was only six years old and they . . ."

"Take a deep breath," Harry said firmly.

"They . . . they left a message written in blood on one of the walls." Hermione regained a bit of control. "Saying, 'you can't protect them all Potter.' What are we going to do?"

"Respond in kind," Harry said. "Sergeant Major."

"Yes sir."

"Take Ms. Granger out and get her a bit of air," Harry commanded.

"Yes sir."

"Poor thing," Major Rickenbacker said with a frown.

"Was the pictures that did it to her," McLain spoke up causing several men to jump. "They took their time about it and it was rather messy. Reminded me a bit of some of the things I saw in Nanking before the war." The old man said as he began handing out the afore mentioned items.

"Gods," one of the other officers gasped.

"I hate to say this gentlemen." Harry looked around the room. "But this does give me an excuse for the action we have planned for tomorrow."

"One request Major," Finn said coldly. "A little change in the rules of engagement."

"Tell the men to raise the black flag."

"Gladly."

IIIIIIII

"Morning Major," Neville greeted his friend. "Do you have a minute?"

"You can have two," Harry said with a smile. "I can't spare more than that."

"I want to come off my convalescent leave," Neville said quickly. "My new hand is working perfectly and there isn't any reason I should have any more rest."

"Really?" Harry tossed Neville a large teacup. "Catch."

Neville reflexively tried to grab the cup with his new hand but the fingers refused to close properly. "I don't need a hand to command men," Neville said quickly.

"How long does Doctor Harper want you to rest?"

"Two more months," Neville admitted with an expression of profound discomfort.

"In one week," Harry said. "You will come back and we will reassess your mobility. Until then, I want you to go home and do the exercises she taught you."

"I understand sir," Neville agreed.

"I don't think you do," Harry said gently. "You're a fine combat commander but you're not at one hundred percent right now. At eighty I'll let you come back, at ninety I'll let you kick down doors again."

"I'm at seventy nine right now," Neville said hopefully.

"Then you'll have no problem being at eighty in a week," Harry said firmly.

"Yes sir."

Harry smiled as he watched his friend leave. If the injury hadn't prevented Neville from taking part in the operation then Harry would have had to find another excuse to keep the boy's hands relatively clean. It wouldn't do to change the plan this late in the game. Neville wouldn't thank him if he ever found out what Harry had done, but Harry could live with that. Sacrifices had to be made in war and it would be naive to think they wouldn't be necessary to build a new society.

IIIIIIII

"Is there some reason that Major Potter didn't come to this meeting?" The General asked slowly.

"He's busy," Hermione said. "But he sends his regrets."

"We'll get to that later," the General said. "In the mean time, I need to know what he's going to do about the attack yesterday. Higher is on my back and making noises about relieving Major Potter and placing a new man in charge if something doesn't get done soon."

"Harry . . ."

"Is a fine young officer," the General said. "But not one I'd have as a regimental commander until he gained more experience if he didn't have a lot of experienced Non Coms."

"As I was saying," Hermione said firmly. "Harry is responding in kind to the Death Eater attack."

"Go on."

"He was going to strike anyway as soon as he got the new men and this latest attack just gave him the excuse," Hermione said firmly. "He also told me one thing that I was to pass on to you."

"What's that?"

"He told me to say that he'd raised the black flag with his colors."

"I see . . . thank you Ms. Granger, I'll be sure to tell the higher ups that their concerns were misplaced and that I have every Confidence that Major Potter is up to the job ahead."

"What does it mean General?" Hermione asked. "About the black flag. Harry wouldn't tell me."

"That?" The old man asked in surprise. "No quarter."

IIIIIIII

Harry's face was impassive as he watched his men set fire to the Malfoy home. So far as he could tell, they had brought this upon themselves. All around the United Kingdom, similar scenes were repeating themselves. Mao had said that a guerilla swims through the population like a fish through water. Harry was draining the lake.

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Paneru had to smile as he observed the amateurish guard the Death Eaters put around their hide out. It was beginning to look like bringing in the old experienced men wasn't as necessary as he'd thought it would be. He reassessed that statement when one of the 'guards' began to relieve himself on a bush not two feet away. Hell, his twelve year old granddaughter's girl guides group could take this bunch of jokers without too much trouble. Sighing at the unprofessional conduct shown by his foes, Paneru pulled out his knife and went to work.

The death eater looked at the child like man with the large knife and began to laugh, those laughs soon turned to screams as he lost his manhood, then gurgles as his blood spouted from the void that was his neck. The death eater learned as others have why the Gurka was one of the most feared of knife fighters in the world. Two slashes were all that it took. The death eater's companions looked on in fear and began to back away too late. With a cry of glee, the other Gurkas stalked forward. Their knives, small swords really had been thirsty for too long. The death eaters pointed their wands at the Gurkas only to lose their wands first, still clasped in spasming hands now severed at the wrists. Phantom pain was brief, as they started to bleed out, the next knife blow across their throat was a blessing really.

|||||||

"Neville?" His gran asked in shock. "What are you doing home right now?"

"Harry said I had to wait at least another week before he'd let me come back on duty," Neville said sadly.

"Your hand?" She asked sympathetically.

"Yeah," the boy agreed. "I . . . is there someone else here?"

"Why would you ask that dear?" The old woman asked nervously."

"I can hear them," Neville said as his hand dropped to the hilt of his sword.

"He's old enough to know Augusta," a gravelly voice said. "Tell him."

"Tell me what? Neville demanded.

"Your grandfather, my husband is alive." The old woman said. "He's been hiding his relationship with us to keep us safe."

"From who?"

"Half the bloody world," Moody said as he stepped out. "I have lots of people wanting to kill me and many more that would be happy to get you instead."

"You're my grandfather?" Neville asked in shock.

"That I am," Moody agreed.

"I . . . I don't know what to say?"

"Say teach me to kill Death Eaters," Moody said with a grin. "And we'll have something to bond over as your grandmum likes to say."

"Teach me to kill Death Eaters," Neville said eagerly.

IIIIIIIIII

"Listen up," Major Rickenbacker's voice came over the comm as he addressed his crew, he'd used the commander's privilage to claim the commander's seat on the first 'check out' flight. "Major Potter was good enough to let us take a check out flight in this thing to test the guns." The old man had to smile at the crew's enthusiastic cheers. "On a patch of land with what I'm told are unusually strong wards containing nothing whatsoever making it a perfect firing range. I want that place to be smoking rubble as fast as possible and I want those bastards to die before they get an idea of what the Gooney Bird can do."

IIIIIIII

Finn smiled as he thrust his dagger into the Death Eater's kidney. It really wasn't a commander's job to do this sort of thing, but he'd always led from the front and at twenty seven was too old to learn any other way.

"Are the charges set?" The captain asked his Top Sergeant.

"Set and ready to blow," the man agreed. "Ready to go?"

"Have the men secured the area?"

"Not a living thing except for us."

"Then report our status to the Major and move the men out."

IIIIIIII

Young Malfoy, Goyle and Crabbe were posted as sentries at the door of one of their master's lairs. Eyes and ears obvious to their surroundings since none one would dare approach this location. Besides, anyone approaching had to get past two more layers of security. They were safe. Draco turned to ask Crabbe about which girl Goyle fancied now, but Crabbe was sitting down, unresponsive. Draco shook him and Goyle toppled over, this throat a ruin of blood and flesh. Two well placed knife thrusts silenced the other two boys before the managed to scream and raise the alarm to the few living Death Eaters.

IIIIIIII

"Come on boys," Captain Hart screamed. "No quarter."

"No quarter," the men echoed as they swarmed the scattered defenders.

"Av . . ."

"None of that," Captain Hart said as he brained the death eater with a shovel. "Kill em all." Hart looked over his work a few short and bloody minutes later with a profound sense of satisfaction.

"What now sir?" One of the platoon leaders asked.

"Stack them up in the main room and douse them with petrol," Hart replied immediately. "Burn everything."

IIIIIIIIII

"Poppy," Snape screamed as he stumbled into the great hall. "I need you."

"Severus what . . . my god what happened to you?" The woman asked in horror as she took in his appearance.

"I dunno," Snape said dully. "One moment everything w' fine and th' nex th' walls were comin down on top o' us."

"Quickly, on one of the tables."

"I saw M'nar get cut in halp," Snape slurred. "The world exploded. . . . what happned?"

"Just go to sleep Severus," the old woman said kindly. "Just try to go to sleep."

"The world jus exploded," Snape managed to say one more time before the spells put him to sleep.

IIIIIIIIII

"So how'd it go Major Eddie?" One of the crewmen asked as the old man climbed down to the runway.

"Not gonna give up my warthog," the old man said with a grin. "But ol' Trogdor here was a nice change of pace. Bet the poor bastards didn't know what hit 'em."

"Busted the place up?"

"Followed Temujin's example," Rickenbacker laughed. "Didn't leave one stone standing on top of another."

"They deserved it sir," the man said seriously. "That and more. I . . . I saw the pictures."

"I did too airman," Major Rickenbacker sighed. "Almost made me want to go down there with the crunchies to do things personally."

AN: A bit short but sweet, this looked like a good stop point. Think we'll start with a bunch of worthless leaches in the next chapter. Thanks go to Dave and a few others, I've been waiting months to write this chapter.

Omake: The Police man's dilemma

"Mr. McLain?"

"What's it to ye?"

"Is this your granddaughter?"

"That's her," McLain confirmed. "What'd she do?"

"A man tried to get her to get in his van," the constable explained. "So she stabbed him thirty two times."

"And?"

"And he's in intensive care."

"I see," McLain growled. "I'll handle this."

"But . . ."

"Intensive care?" McLain accused his granddaughter.

"I was trying to draw it out," the little girl defended herself. "How was I supposed to know that the constable would stop me, I thought he'd join in."

"That true?" McLain accused the other man. "You stop her fore she could finish?"

"I . . . yes, he has to go to prison."

"Ah . . . you see hon," McLain said to the young girl. "All sorts of bad things happen to men like that in prison."

"Really?" She looked up at the police man with hopeful eyes.

"That's right," he agreed. "They use guys like him like currency."

"So instead of saving his life, you were saving him so he'd get tortured for a long time?"

"That's right," McLain said. "Remember how I told you to trust the police because a lot of them are retired soldiers?"

"I remember," the girl agreed. "I'm sorry I tried to stab you when you were putting bandages on that guy."

"That's alright you little monster," the constable said with a smile. "Now here's your little knife back."

"What do you say?" McLain prompted.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome," the officer said as he began walking away. "Wait . . . what just happened?"

Mostly Harmless

"Still no idea of what happened to Severus?" Albus asked.

"None," Poppy said. "From what I've managed to get out of him, they were just sitting around a table when place collapsed on top of him. If it hadn't been for his emergency portkey . . ."

"Thank you, I . . ."

"Turn on the wireless," Hestia shouted as she burst into the room.

"Really." Molly looked like she was working her self into a rant.

"Not now Molly," Arthur said sharply. "Turn it on."

"What's this all about?" Dumbledore asked.

"I just heard," Hestia gasped. "Several homes have been destroyed, they don't know how many are dead. They said they were going to explain things on the broadcast."

"I . . ."

"Shhh, it's starting."

They gathered around the box and listened to the tinny sound that emerged.

"This is Shawn Murphy with the WWN news room, I'm here at the Leaky Cauldron with Major Harry Potter."

"Hello Shawn," Harry said. "How are you today?"

"Very good Major," Shawn replied. "You told us that you had an explanation for what happened."

"I do," Harry agreed. "But first, I think you should take a look at these pictures and describe them to your viewers."

"I'm looking at the bodies of several people," Shawn said. "They appear to have been tortured and the entire scene is quite appalling."

"Turn to the next one," Harry ordered.

"I . . . my god."

"Describe it," Harry said coldly.

"It's . . . it's the nude body of a young girl." Shawn made a retching noise.

"Six years old," Harry added. "Go on."

"It appears that she . . . that they . . . what kind of people do things like this?" Shawn sobbed. "My god."

"I think they get the idea," Harry said. "Turn to the next picture."

"There's more?" Shawn asked in horror.

"Just one," Harry agreed. "I left out the bad ones."

"There are worse than this?" He asked in horror.

"Much worse," Harry confirmed. "Now turn to the last one."

"It's a picture of a message written in blood," the reporter said dully. "It says 'you can't protect them all Potter' and I presume that it was left by the killers?"

"You are correct," Harry said. "They left me that message and today I delivered my response."

"You didn't."

"I had my men go to a number of places with orders to kill everyone they find and burn everything they didn't kill," Harry said. "These places included several Death Eater safe houses and every death eater home I could find. That is my response Tom, I can protect them."

I can protect them by killing every one of your followers, I can protect them by burning everything that can be used to give aid and comfort to you and your cause. And I can protect them by killing you."

"I . . . who's this Tom you mentioned?" Shawn struggled to regain his sense of professionalism.

"Tom Riddle," Harry said. "Hogwarts head boy some fifty years ago, now known as Voldemort."

"Thank you for your time Major Potter," Shawn said in as professional a voice as he could muster. "Is there anything you'd like to add?"

"The Death Eaters challenged me when they killed that family," Harry began. "And I responded. Now I'd like to deliver a challenge of my own."

"Yes?"

"Everything I've seen indicates that Voldemort and his Death Eaters are nothing more than cowards," Harry said. "I'd like to offer him an opportunity to prove me wrong. I shall be waiting for him with my men in one week's time. Directions to the location will be printed in the papers."

"This is Shawn Murphy, signing off."

Arthur reached over and turned off the wireless. "Well . . . what now?"

"I have to go speak with Harry," Dumbledore replied. "Perhaps I can convince him to stop this madness."

IIIIIIII

"Did you hear that?" Fudge screeched. "He admitted it, he admitted that he killed all those people."

"He admitted that he killed several Death Eaters Minister," the adviser said quickly. "Something that most of the common people agree is a good thing."

"But . . ."

"But it can be used to our advantage," he interrupted smoothly. "After everything has quieted down again."

"I suppose," Fudge agreed after several long seconds. "If all else fails then I suppose that we can always send the Aurors after him."

"Of course Minister." The advisor sighed. Looks like time to start considering retirement options. He considered and quickly rejected going to Potter and offering his services, the boy was too likely to have him taken into the next room and shot in the back of the head. No, better to leave gracefully than . . . the alternative. "Whatever you say."

IIIIIIII

"Harry, thank god I got here before you left."

"Dumbledore," Harry greeted the man. "Was there something you wanted?" Behind the old man, several soldiers shifted their bodies so that their rifles weren't quite pointed at the Headmaster's head.

"You can't face Voldemort," Dumbledore got right to the point. "You're not ready."

"Another thing that can be laid at your feet," Harry said with a shrug. "No use crying over spilled milk and all that. Was there anything else you wanted?"

"You insist on doing this?"

"I do," Harry agreed.

"Then the Order shall stand by you," Dumbledore said firmly. "We've had our disagreements but it's time to put all that aside."

"The Order isn't fit to guard a whorehouse," Harry said with a grin. "With one or two glaring exceptions."

"You can't stop us," Dumbledore said stubbornly.

"How about I keep you in reserve," Harry offered. "Provided that you agree to place yourselves under my command."

"If that's what it takes," Dumbledore agreed quickly.

"It is," Harry agreed. "Good day Headmaster."

"Wait," Dumbledore said quickly. "There's something else?"

"Oh?"

"The prisoners," Dumbledore said. "Even if you didn't take any today then you still have the ones you took before."

"True," Harry agreed. "What of them?"

"When were you planning to give them to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement?"

"I wasn't."

"But . . . but . . . why?"

"Let's just say that the Ministry hasn't exactly impressed me with their ability to keep prisoners from escaping."

"If you won't trust them, how about me?"

"No."

"Harry please."

"It's not something I'm willing to compromise on," Harry said. "Anything else?"

"Harry please," Dumbledore begged. "Be reasonable."

"I am being reasonable," Harry said mildly. "I will not release a single prisoner into your custody or into the custody of the Ministry. To do so would be the same as releasing them to harm more people."

"Then you're only concerned with the potential crimes that might commit in the future?" Dumbledore asked quickly.

"I wouldn't say only," Harry replied. "But yes, my primary concern is protecting society from prior offenders."

"Then why don't you allow me to take anyone that won't pose any danger," Dumbledore begged. "Just those that you feel won't commit further crimes."

"You want me to give you any harmless death eaters that I have in my custody?" Harry asked with an amused grin. "Done."

"Yes, exactly." Dumbledore agreed. "Thank you for being so understanding."

"McLain," Harry called out. "Take the headmaster to the harmless death eaters and allow him to take as many as he wishes."

"Yes sir," McLain agreed. "This way sir."

"So how do you like being a soldier?" Dumbledore tried to engage the frightening man in a conversation.

"Better than the alternative," McLain said mechanically. "Right through here."

"So have you been a soldier long?" Dumbledore tried again.

"All my life," McLain agreed. "The harmless death eaters are in this room sir, you may go in." Dumbledore opened the door and turned deathly pale.

"Has there been a mistake?" The old man said sickly. "did you take me to the wrong room perhaps?"

"No mistake," McLain said firmly. "You may have as many as you wish."

"But . . . but they're dead," Dumbledore said in horror.

"That they are," McLain agreed. "Did you perhaps want more of them? I'd be happy to . . . render more death eaters harmless if you require more."

"No," Dumbledore said quickly. "You'd really kill innocent people?"

"Nope," McLain replied with a grin. "But I'd have trouble finding an innocent person among their ranks wouldn't I?"

"You can't mean that," Dumbledore said. "Don't they deserve a chance to redeem themselves?"

"Some things can't be forgiven," McLain said simply. "They gave up any right they had to redeem themselves when they took that mark."

"But . . . but . . ." Dumbledore tried hard to find a reply that the man would understand.

"I'll grant that one of them could have seen the error in their ways and decided to repent," McLain admitted with a frown. "They might have stopped tomorrow and decided to live lives of peace."

"Yes," Dumbledore seized the moment. "So isn't that chance worth showing some restraint?"

"No," McLain said simply. "As I said, my duty isn't to them, my duty is to the innocent. Besides, if they really did change, if they really faced up to their actions like men then they would not go to you."

"What would they do then?"

"They would pull their wand and kill as many of their former comrades as they could before they fell," McLain said firmly. "One must accept responsibility and atone for one's actions."

"So death is the only answer no matter what happens?" Dumbledore asked. "What about providing information? Couldn't a death eater turn spy and atone in that manner?"

"Blood washes away dishonor," McLain said with a shrug. "Providing information before drawing blood is the action of a man, playing at being a spy to escape responsibility is the action of a coward."

|||||

"One week," Neville said firmly. "That's why he gave me one week."

"What was that Son?" Moody asked.

"Harry gave me a week to get my hand back," Neville said. "And he just challenged Voldemort to a fight in one week."

"I wouldn't worry about it lad," Moody said. "You'll be fine."

"But what if I can't make it in time?"

"I've got a couple of people that owe me favors," Moody said with a shrug. "You'll have all the time you need."

|||||

"Sure we wanna do this?" Hermione asked.

"It's time to end this," Harry sighed. "One way or another."

"True," Hermione agreed. "But isn't it a big risk?"

"You know what I've got planned," Harry retorted. "Time will just give the advantage to the other side."

"And a week should just give him enough time to gather all of his forces," Hermione agreed. "I still don't like it."

"Neither do I," Harry admitted. "I can't help but think of all the things that can go wrong."

"Let's go get something to eat," the girl said suddenly. "We haven't done that for a while."

"And ice cream after that," Harry agreed. "Just the two of us."

"Yeah."

"I'm going out Sergeant Major," Harry called out as the two friends walked out the door. "I'll be back in an hour or two."

"Take your time sir," Smythe called back with a smile. "Take lots of time."

"So what did you want to eat?" Hermione asked as she took Harry's arm. "Granddad showed me a good Nepali place."

"Why don't we just find something traditional?" Harry suggested. "Bubble and squeak, bangers and mash that sort of thing?"

"I saw a fish and chips stand a couple days ago," Hermione mused. "We can go there."

"Sounds perfect," Harry agreed.

"Maybe go to a movie after that?" Hermione said hesitantly. "Before we get ice cream I mean."

"If you like," Harry said with a smile. "We can do anything you want."

AN: Chapter or two before Volde buys it, I think. It'll also be fun to write the next few chapters after that. I'm going to enjoy writing some of those scenes.

Omake: More of McLain's little Monsters

"Sir," Smythe said gravely. "I have some bad news."

"What is it?"

"Group of death eaters attacked some girl guides," Smythe said tightly. "There were no survivors."

"Gods."

"Yes sir," Smythe agreed. "McLain is going to be impossible. Bastard's as proud as proud can be."

"Hwa?"

"We've tried to recover the bodies but the girls are still playing football with the heads so . . ."

"Right . . . send up a bottle of something will you."

"What did you want sir?"

"Anything that will get me drunk," Harry replied.

Omake by davidiusbrown

"The difference between you and I, Dumbledore, is that you are the leader of not just one, but two illegal organizations, the Order of the Phoenix and the Wizengamot, whereas I am a duly appointed officer of the Army of the United Kingdom."

"Harry, the Ministry of Magic is not illegal."

"Ministry FOR Magic, not Ministry OF Magic. We are all subjects of Her

Majesty the Queen. The Minister for Magic has no independent legal authority. By acting outside of the oversight of the Government, the Ministry for Magic is in rebellion against the Crown. I must leave you now, but I suspect that we shall discuss this issue at greater length another day. If you have any further objections to my activities, please take them up with the Government. In the meanwhile, I shall do

my duty and carry out my orders. Good day, sir."

"I would not be so presumptuous as to suggest that Snape associate himself with better company. But there you have it."

OK, another idea - who wants to see Napalm dropped on the Forbidden Forest? Or maybe...wait for it...Agent Orange.

"The forest is too close to the castle. We don't need to be assaulted by Acromantulas and I do not trust the Centaurs. We need to defoliate a kilometer deep strip all around."

"I've got just the thing we need, Major."

Omake along the same theme by meteoricshipyards

It seems I am forever playing catch up with this group. Here it is Wed. and I'm only reading messages from last Sunday. But these messages gave me an idea:

Hermione entered the Headmaster's office carrying a very Muggle looking clipboard. She noticed the flowers on the empty perch.

"Ah, Miss Granger! You have news?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yes, Professor. I found the answer. The problem is a lot more extensive than it appeared at first."

"Please, have a seat, and explain."

Hermione could tell that the headmaster was still upset. His eyes were red and puffy; there was no sign of the twinkle.

"It's all related, Professor. Hagrid's illness. The missing Fwoopers and Auguries."

"Is it a magical attack? A curse cast by Voldemort?"

"No. We did it to ourselves. After the attack of the Acromantulas the ministry said they would take care of the problem. They did; they

used a poison to get rid of them around Hogwarts. The poison they used is called DDT. It kills insects, and thus took care of the acromantulas, but it killed a lot of other insects, too. But before they die, they can get eaten by birds. In birds it has the unfortunate effect of making their egg shells so thin that they crack before the baby bird is able to live on it's own. In Fawc's case, it killed him during his burning day. There was no magic involved."

"And Hagrid?"

"He has pancreatic cancer, which might have been caused by exposure to the pesticide. St. Mungo's isn't sure of his prognosis; the damage done to his liver by his alcoholic consumption is not good, too. I'm sorry Professor."

"Thank you for your help, Miss Granger. That will be all for now."

Omake by hattenjc

What IF Harry Leading Officer among the OLD soldier was Ghenghiz Cohen known as Cohen the Barbarian from the Diskworld.

... Omake Omake...

Bellatrix laughed, the Old muggle was a fool he just dropped his Thunder-wand or Gon as the muggles called it and drew a sword... She snored as she raised her wand he must be at least 90 years old..

Then he started to smile a evil your DEAD type of smile his teeth were 100 diamonds and Bellatrix had a feeling they where NOT a girls best friend..

Then they moved.

"AV Urggg" Belatrix gurgled as the OLD muggle Sword cut of her head..

Cohen grinned "Mayor this the bitch you where taling about" He said grinning as Potter run over holding a sword and a gun IT sure looked like the Kid was learning how to REALLY fight.

Murder Most Foul

"Harry," Hermione stuck her head into his office. "Ms. Blake wanted to have a word with you if you have time."

"Sure, send her in." Harry said quickly.

"Major."

"Ms. Blake."

"Would you mind if I asked Ms. Granger to join us?"

"Not at all," Harry replied. "That is, if you'd like to Hermione."

"Of course." Hermione smiled at Harry as she took a seat across from him.

"What can I do for you Ms. Blake?"

"I'd like to ask your aid in plotting a murder," she said seriously.

"Who?"

"Something that I believe is near and dear to all of us," she continued. "Hogwarts." Hermione took a sharp breath.

"Go on," Harry said calmly.

"Several people have approached me about starting a new school for muggle born students," Daphne said. "The hope was that we could allow students to stay home and commute to school using the doors that the goblins were thoughtful enough to provide."

"What about the families of the current muggle born students?" Hermione asked.

"The response has been favorable," Daphne replied. "Especially when we mentioned that the school would be placed in the middle of

a military base. There have been . . . questions about the security at Hogwarts."

"But Hogwarts is . . . oh." Hermione cut off. "Never mind."

"A safer place, a better environment, and the potential of spending more time at home."

"What about the pureblood reaction?"

"We haven't spoken with anyone with strong ties in the wizarding world," Daphne said. "We're hoping to keep it as quiet as possible until we're ready to act."

"I see." Harry's words sat in the room.

"Harry?" Hermione broke the silence, she didn't like the lost look on her friend's face.

"Hogwarts was always a symbol of hope to me," Harry said after a few moments. "It always represented an escape from my . . . relatives. It was always more of a home than what I had on privvy drive."

"I understand that Major, but . . ."

"Do it," Harry interrupted with his eyes closed. "Work fast, I want it open before . . ."

"We've got everything ready," Daphne said. "We've just been waiting on your approval."

"Get as many purebloods as you can," Harry sighed. "Killing their culture will go a long way towards completing our long term plans. Good work Ms. Blake."

"Thank you Major," she said sadly. "But after all this, do you think you could call me Daphne?"

"Yes, of course Daphne. And please call me Harry."

"Thank you Harry," Daphne said. "Perhaps we can rehabilitate Hogwarts if everything goes well."

"Perhaps," Harry said slowly. "Could you spare a few more minutes of your time?"

"Of course," Daphne said quickly.

"Could you put up a few more secrecy charms Hermione," Harry said to his friend.

"Yes Harry." Hermione spent several minutes casting every privacy and anti ease dropping charm she knew.

"What's this all about?" Daphne asked with a curious frown.

"Ms. Blake." Hermione broke off and shot Harry a pleading look.

"We have a proposal for you," Harry said easily. "One we hope you'll give every due consideration . . ."

IIIIIIII

"I need quiet," Dumbledore said loudly. "Thank you. I have spoken with Harry about his plan to face Voldemort on the field of battle."

"Did you get him to change his mind?" Molly asked quickly, the woman was close to tears.

"No," Dumbledore said. "But I have managed to get him to agree to something else. Win or loose, survive or perish, the Order will stand with him." Everyone was deafened by the voices of their companions, each one trying to be heard over the others. "Silence," Dumbledore's voice boomed. "I will not require you to stand by me in what may be a hopeless fight, but I will ask it. Who will stand with me? Who will stand with Harry? Who among us will put an end to the darkness that is covering our nation?"

"I will." Arthur was the frist to stand. "Molly, I want you to take the children someplace safe."

"You can't ask me to leave you Arthur," the woman waled.

"I've loved you since our fifth year," Arthur said tenderly. "And if it weren't for the children I'd never dream of sending you away. Please Molly, if I'm going to die then at least let me face my end knowing that you're safe."

"Yes Arthur," the woman sobbed.

"I'll be there" Remus was next. "James and Sirius would never let me hear the end of it if I didn't go, not to mention what Lilly would say if I let her son do this without me."

"I've got no place better to be." In ones and twos, the majority of the Order put up their hands and volunteered. The end was coming and they were determined to face it with a smile.

IIIIIIIIII

"You wanted to see me Minister?" Madame Bones asked.

"I want your men ready to arrest the winners after the battle between Potter and you-know-who," Fudge said firmly. "We can't let this threat to the wizarding world continue."

"You want me to arrest Harry Potter if he defeats Voldemort?" Madame Bones asked emotionlessly.

"Yes," Fudge agreed.

"On what charge?"

"We'll deal with that later," Fudge waved it off like it was unimportant. "The important thing is to get him quickly and to keep him away from the press until I've had a chance to get the correct story to the public."

"Minister . . . you do realise that Potter has more men then I do are you not?"

"What?" Fudge squeaked. "How?"

"I've had my people keeping track of the guards in Diagon Alley," Madame Bones said. "Right now I can account for triple the amount of people I have at my disposal including Hit Wizards."

"Call in the retired Aurors," Fudge snapped.

"I've been activating the reserve," Bones continued. "And asking the others to remain on standby."

"So what's the problem?" Fudge demanded.

"I've been getting noncommittal replies from several of them, and outright refusals from others." Amelia replied. "It didn't make much sense to me until one of my former Aurors told me something."

"What?" Fudge asked with growing dread.

"She told me that the wizarding world had abandoned her, tossed her aside like garbage." Amelia said coldly. "She told me that as far as she was concerned, that we could all rot."

"Muggle born?"

"Along with a good portion of my Aurors," Madame Bones agreed. "She also told me something else."

"Let's have it," Fudge sighed.

"She told me the Harry Potter had accepted her and that she'd stand with him," Amelia said with a small smile at the Minister's discomfort. "I've done a bit of checking and I've found that nearly every muggle born and half blood former Auror below the age of sixty has joined Harry Potter's forces. And that a good portion of the purebloods have also joined them."

"Purebloods?" Fudge asked sickly.

"We're a close knit family," Bones explained. "You don't forget people who have risked their lives to save yours. Will that be all Minister?"

"Yes Madame Bones," Fudge said slowly. "That will be all."

|||||||

"Let's go get some icecream Harry," Hermione said suddenly. Her friend had been uncharacteristically silent since their meeting with Ms. Blake.

"You go ahead," Harry muttered.

"I'd rather not go alone," Hermione said. "Please?"

"I'll send Mundy," Harry said without looking up. "And maybe a few of the new men."

"Harry please," Hermione begged. "What's wrong?"

"Hogwarts," Harry breathed.

"Oh."

"I can't believe . . ."

"It might not work out like that," Hermione said gently. "If all goes well then we can connect the goblin doors up to the new school so that students can go back and fourth."

"You really think the Governors will allow that?"

"I really believe that if all goes according to plan that they won't have a choice," Hermione said firmly. "Not after the decrees that Fudge rammed down their throats. If everything goes well then we won't be killing Hogwarts, we'll be saving it."

"Really?" Harry asked hopefully.

"Hogwarts is too valuable to drop," Hermione said firmly. "Just the Library would . . . "

"That's my girl," Harry said with a laugh. "Bet you thought the whole thing up just so you could find a way to keep the library in use."

"It's a valuable resource," Hermione tried to defend herself.

"Come on." Harry stood and offered Hermione his arm. "Let's go get something to eat."

"And then we can get some ice cream," Hermione said firmly as she took his arm. "Ok?"

"Of course."

IIIIIIII

"Augusta," Madame Bones greeted the old woman as she walked through the door into the Longbottom home. "Thank you for having me."

"You're always welcome here Amelia," Neville's grandmother replied. "What brings you here?"

"My niece is missing her boyfriend for one," Amelia said with a smile. "Where have you hidden young Neville?"

"He's off with his grandfather," Augusta replied. "They're bonding."

"Finally told him huh?"

"It was long past time," Augusta sighed. "My little baby grandson became a man overnight."

"They do that," Amelia agreed with a smile. "Neville and Alastor will be back for supper if you'd like to speak with them. Until then, would you be so good as to join me for tea?"

"Of course Augusta."

"Good, it gets so lonely around here with my boys out of the house."

IIIIIIIIII

"Dangerous you say?"

"Very," Fudge agreed. "I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Potter and his men planned to go after the Muggle world after they've rolled up the wizarding world."

"Something must be done then," the man in the grey suit said quickly. "Since you have all that experience dealing with . . . Potter did you say his name was?"

"Yes Potter," Fudge agreed.

"Well since you've got all that experience dealing with Potter, what do you suggest we do?"

"I think it best that we wait until he's had a chance to deal with you-know-who," Fudge said with a wink. "And then . . ."

"Afraid I don't," the man in the grey suit said with a frown. "Sorry who?"

"You know," Fudge said quickly. "The dark thingy . . . vol . . . you know." Fudge waved his hands helplessly.

"Vole mart?"

"Close enough," Fudge agreed. "As I was saying, we wait until they've had a chance to fight and then you take the winner with one of those . . . uh . . . nuks I believe you call them."

"Nuts maybe?"

"Yes that's it."

"Have no fear Minister," the man in the grey suit. "I'll personally make sure that Potter gets what's coming to him after he's done with the fight."

"Excellent," Fudge purred. "You know, I never hated the muggle world like some of my fellows."

"Oh?"

"Yes, unlike most wizards I know how valuable muggles can be if you find the right one to talk to."

"Glad to hear you say that Minister," the man in the grey suit replied. "You don't know how much I like to hear things like that."

"You know . . . you do a good job for me and I might be persuaded to put a word in the Prim Minister's ear about you."

"Be still my heart," the man in the grey suit said dryly. "What do you think about . . ."

IIIIIIIIII

"So what do you wanna do now?" Harry asked.

"I guess we could . . ." Hermione cut off at the shout.

"HARRY."

Harry's hand instinctively dropped to the but of his pistol as he turned. "RON," he yelled back cheerfully. "How have you been."

"Glad I found you mate," Ron said breathlessly. "Been walking up and down this street hoping to run into you. "Hello Hermione."

"Hello Ron," the girl replied.

"I'm with you Harry," Ron said firmly. "Till the end."

"What are you talking about Ron?" Harry asked with a frown.

"Mum's been keeping a close eye on me," Ron explained. "Or I'd have been here to join you sooner. Only got away now cause she's been with dad all day. I heard them talking and I know what your plan is, I won't let you face the end without me Harry. I'm with you . . . to the end."

"Just what do you think is going to happen Ron?" Harry asked oddly.

"You're going to take Voldemort down with you," Ron said tightly. "Harry we've been friends since that first year on the train, might as well be together in the end."

"Ron, come with us." Hermione said with a long suffering sigh. "We'll explain things."

"Hermione what . . ."

"You boys always have to be so dramatic," an annoyed Hermione interrupted. "What makes you think I'd allow Harry to go off and get himself killed?"

"Didn't know you were here too," Ron muttered. "Figured you were safe at home."

"So you were going to get yourself killed with Harry without me?" Hermione's voice took on a dangerous tone.

"Uh . . . didn't really think it through," Ron offered weakly.

"Just like Ron," Harry laughed. "Comes up with a course of action and damn the details."

"Hmph." Hermione couldn't hide the smile growing on his face. "It's good to see you Ron."

"Let's get a table at that cafe," Harry suggested. "Settle things there."

"Whatever you think is best mate," Ron agreed. "Just know that you're not talking me out of this, you go, we go." The three of them found a table and made their orders.

"First thing you need to know is that I'm not looking to take Voldemort down with me," Harry said. "I wouldn't be getting in this fight if I didn't think I would be able to win."

"But the Order . . ."

"You're getting your information from the Order?" Hermione asked incredulously.

"Well they do have Dumbledore," Ron muttered.

"Dumbledore is a good man but he doesn't have what it takes to win a war," Harry said.

"I still wanna be a part of this mate," Ron maintained stubbornly. Harry caught Hermione's eye and motioned towards the bathroom with his chin.

"I'll be back in a few minutes," Hermione said. "I just have to go powder my nose."

"Hermione and I have gotten closer in the last few months," Harry said to his friend.

"Good on you mate," Ron said with a grin.

"And the fight isn't as safe as I've led her to believe," Harry continued. "Don't get me wrong, I think we'll win but . . ."

"But battle is never a safe place to be," Ron said solemnly.

"Hermione doesn't know but she's not going to be on the front line," Harry continued. "And I'd feel better if I knew there was someone I could trust watching her."

"Keep her from fighting and to protect her if everything goes wrong," Ron said slowly. "You can count on me mate."

"I knew I could Ron," Harry said thickly.

"Shh, she's coming back." Ron hissed.

"Our drinks get here yet?" Hermione asked brightly.

"Not yet," Harry replied. The three friends talked for the next couple of hours and caught up on everything that had happened since they'd last seen each other at the end of the school year.

"I gotta go," Ron said with a glance at the clock. "I'll see you at your building in a week."

"In a week," Harry agreed.

"Well?" Hermione asked after Ron was out of the earshot.

"I told him that he'd be your bodyguard," Harry said with a smile.

"You utter bastard," Hermione said in shock. "Ron will stay safe so long as I do is that it?"

"Never thought of that," Harry said with a sly grin. "Sorry Hermione, looks like you're not going to be there for the battle after all."

"I'll get you for that Potter," Hermione growled.

"You'll try."

AN: Had planned to use Ron a lot more then I did, omake about that is below.

Omake: They try to grow up so fast.

"And just where do you think you're going?" McLain demanded.

"To the battle," the little girl replied.

"No you don't, you remember what I told you about that."

"That you're a smelly old fossil that needs to recapture your youth before the icy grip of death drags you to the underworld?"

"Go to your room."

Omake: Below was written before I thought things through. Was going to have the Ministry crew join Harry before the story took on a life of it's own. Was going to include Ron until I started thinking about Molly Weasley and I came to the conclusion that there was no way that she'd allow one of her children to go off to fight. Especially not one of her youngest babies.

"What happened?" Harry swallowed the lump in his throat as he looked down at the body of his oldest friend.

"Lieutenant Weasley insisted on going in first," the men avoided Harry's eye. "He kicked down the door and they hit him with a hex, didn't even have time to get a spell of his own off."

"I see," Harry nodded. "Who are they?"

"We think these are the men who killed Lieutenant Weasley," the troop indicated the line of prisoners.

"Ok," Harry nodded. "Shoot them."

"Yes sir," the men nodded.

e're going to have to be quicker and more careful about preparing the site then we'd originally planned."

"Don't worry sir," McLain said. "Like you said, all we gotta clean up is a few Death Eaters and some sleeping vampires."

"Yeah," Neville agreed. "But are we going to have enough beer for everyone?"

"I'll send a man out to hijack a truck later sir."

"Good man."

IIIIIIII

"You sure you're ok with sending him out on his own?" Hermione asked Harry as they watched Neville and the men leave.

"He's a good leader," Harry said. "And I have every confidence in him."

"That's not what I asked."

"No it isn't," Harry agreed. "If we're going to be honest, I'm not sure I'm ok with trusting my men with anyone that isn't me."

"But . . . right."

"How'd the meeting with the man in the grey suit go?"

"Fudge tried to get him to kill you," Hermione replied.

"Still no word on the issue?"

"Still waiting the PM's approval."

"Be sure to pass on that I can't be sure of creating a lasting peace if he doesn't agree to my request," Harry said. "Tell them that I'd be more then willing to stand guard forever but . . ."

"I'll pass it on," Hermione agreed quickly. "Do you really think it will work?"

"That what will work?" Harry asked. "The long term plans or the short term?"

"The long term."

"I hope so."

|||||||

Neville crept up behind the guard and silently looped a bit of thin wire around the man's neck. Turning quickly so that they were back to back. Neville bent over causing the Death Eater's feet to lift off the ground. The end of the man's panicked gurgling brought a smile to Neville's face and let him know that things were finished. Slowly easing the man to the ground, Neville drew his dagger and ensured that the man was dead with a quick thrust through the left eye.

"Why didn't you just use the knife?" McLain asked quietly as he emerged from the shadows.

"Never could get the hang of finding the third and fourth," Neville admitted with an embarrassed frown.

"Get with me later," McLain said sympathetically. "I'll show you the trick to it. Don't think my cousin knows that one so it's understandable that you're having a few problems."

"Cousin?"

"Yeah, good to know that there's a few more of us in the world 'eh?"

"Just reminds me of a joke Harry told me," Neville said. "Sir it's a trap . . ."

"There's two of them," McLain finished.

"Should have asked you this before," Neville said slowly. "The other guards?"

"Dead, and I have the men arranging the Willie Pete as we speak."

"Very good Sergeant," Neville said with a grin. "One per coffin?"

"Just like you said," McLain agreed. "Got something else to show you sir."

"What is it?"

"Just look behind the corner," McLain said with a grin. "I know you wanted to do it yourself."

"But at least it was done by one of the family," Neville finished as he looked down at what was left of the Lestranges. "Be sure to get a picture for gran."

"Will do sir."

IIIIIIII

"Madame Bones?"

"What is it?" She snapped. Her niece's boyfriend was risking his life and the girl had locked herself in her room and refused to come out until she was sure that Neville was going to be safe.

"Floo for you."

"Tell them I'm busy."

"It's Mr. Longbottom."

"Put him through," Amelia said quickly.

"Hello Amelia," Neville said with a smile. "Have some spare time?"

"Everything went off without a hitch then?"

"Yep, even got a bonus out of it. The Lestranges had the misfortune of crossing one of my men."

"Which one?"

"McLain."

"Ah . . . so what can I do for you?"

"Just hoping that you could take a few hours off," Neville said. "We're having a small gathering and I was hoping that you and Susan could attend."

"I'll be there," Amelia promised. "What's the location?"

"Bit of land two miles north of what used to be the Parkinson place," Neville replied. "Guess they thought it'd be safe to hide somewhere we'd already checked."

"Guess so," Amelia agreed. "I'll get Susan and bring her over."

"I'll save a beer for you," Neville said with a grin. "Later Amelia."

"Bye Neville." Amelia shut off the floo and burst into a fit of giggles. "I love that boy." Amelia rose from her desk and paused only long enough to tell her assistant that she was taking the rest of the day off.

A few short minutes later she was standing in front of her niece's door trying to get the young girl to come out.

"Go away," Susan sobbed. "I'm not coming out."

"Poor Neville will be so disappointed that you couldn't come to his little party," Amelia said regretfully. "Maybe Hannah is available, I'm sure she could think of something that would cheer him up."

"What?" Susan was suddenly standing in the open door. "He's ok?"

"He's fine dear," Amelia said. "Just like I told you he would be."

"Wait here," Susan ordered. "I gotta get ready."

"Just put on a lite robe and come with me."

"But I have to look my best," Susan protested.

"It'll be too hot if you wear any of your more fashionable robes and after what he did this morning, he's probably covered in soot." Amelia spent a few minutes examining her niece. "Get rid of the tear tracks but leave your hair messed up."

"But . . ."

"Just throw your arms around him and pull him into a kiss the moment you see him," Amelia advised. "And he won't care what you're wearing. Well, if he were the sort that cared about that sort of thing. Look at it this way, would you rather spend time around Neville or would you rather spend it here getting ready?"

"Let's go."

AN: Move on, nothing to see here.

Omake by cadencecascade

Disclaimer: This is in no way my fault. No sleep and reading way way way too much of the excellent fanfiction this group produces did this to me. Also, not beta'd.

"Now," McLain growled, "debrief me on mission Wilderness Hike".

"Ok Grandpa."

"Start with when you geared up, so as I can make sure you remembered to bring everything," suggested McLain.

"Mom went to the store and bought us sleeping bags and everything that was on the list our troop leader Tiffany handed out."

"What kind of artillery did the newest idiot recommend?" interrupted McLain.

"Oh Grandpa she really was an idiot! She didn't recommend any weapons at all so Mom said to bring the standard set plus extra ammunition and at least 2 extra knives."

"Good girl, good girl," muttered McLain under his breath, "I always knew I raised her right, even if she did go off and marry the stupidest man on the planet."

"Mom drove us to the meeting spot at the national park and she gave us an extra grenade for just in case. Tiffany, our troop leader, led the way on the hike. We hiked for approximately 2 miles. We were going really slow and Tiffany and the new girls that weren't here when you were our troop leader still couldn't keep up!"

"Ohh, ohh, I want to tell the next part." interrupted the younger girl. Her older sister pouted for a moment but acquiesced quickly when she notice her grandfather growing impatient.

The tiny girl faced her grandpa with an angelic grin. "Well we stopped an' make camp after we posted a 10 yard perimeter and set up 11 traps for anyone that would try to sneak up on us."

"Good, always at least one more trap than expected," nodded McLain agreeably.

"We divided up the night watch and built a campfire and roasted marshmallows and hotdogs and sang some songs. Tiffany didn't know about the night watches because she made us all go in our tents, but we snuck out to do our duty," reported the smaller girl.

Here the older sister butted in, "At midnight the first attack happened. The Watch-Brownie on duty woke us all up, even Tiffany, and told us a bear was coming."

"A bear? Girl, there are no bears in England." McLain said in bemused askance.

Glaring at her older sibling, the younger sister again took over. "We know, or at least we do now. The enemy had gotten tangled in the traps set up around the perimeter. We took our guns and I am the only one who remembered to grab a grenade and..."

"Only one of you grabbed a grenade? I've taught you girls better than that!" McLain roared.

The little girl went on quickly, all thoughts of bragging gone. "The not-a-bear guy was really upset and he was yelling with his mouth wide open so I yelled cover!' pulled the pin, and threw it in his mouth. The police said the DNA came back as a paroled pedo-something guy that had slipped from his chain'. When Mr. Mean-ol-pedo- something guy exploded Tiffany fainted and we couldn't wake her up so we designated her tent as the infirmary tent and posted twice the amount of guards around the perimeter."

"Wise," McLain agreed, calming down at the report of at least some competence, "go on."

"At sunrise one of the perimeter guards found a nest of rattlesnakes and reported it to the command tent. We took a delegation and negotiated."

"Negotiated? Rattlesnakes?" McLain queried.

"Yep, captured all we could find and blew up the nest with some more grenades. We milked the ones we captured for venom then shot them too. Gonna use it on our knives. Come to find out someone's pets got free and started breeding but we took care of it."

"Excellent work girls. Anything else happen?" McLain asked.

"No," said the older sister slowly, "just that Tiffany isn't our Brownie Troop Leader anymore. The doctor said something about breaks with reality. Are you sure you won't come back an' be our troop leader again Grandpa?"

Omake: A good Officer knows when to . . .

Decided not to use this, truth potions make it unnecessary but it popped into my head. I'm not sure what gave me the idea for this, might have been something Kipling wrote.

"Take a walk sir," Smythe suggested.

"Why?" Harry asked with a frown.

"Sir . . . there are . . . things we can do to convince him to talk," Smythe said slowly. "A good Sergeant knows when it's time to take an enemy behind the rocks and a good officer knows when to look the other way."

At the Hand of the Other

"Aunt Amelia," Susan began in a low voice. "Can I ask you something?"

"What is it dear?"

"Why is everyone so happy?" Susan whispered. "I just heard that Harry is going to go on the Wizard Wireless News Service and announce his location with a dare to . . . the other side."

"And?"

"And why is everyone so happy?" Susan broke and tears began flowing down her face. "They could all die tomorrow but they're laughing and having fun. Why . . . why aren't they more worried?"

"It's because . . ." Amelia cut off when she saw Harry waving for silence. "One moment dear."

"Thought I should get this out before you're all too drunk or hung over to remember it," Harry called out. "Madame Bones, you and Susan are going to have to leave now or stay until after the battle is finished."

"I believe we'll stay," Amelia said simply.

"Alright," Harry agreed. "A lot of commanders would talk about how we were all dead and the fight would be our chance to earn our lives, or about how we were a merry band of brothers. I think that would cut into our drinking time so I'm going to skip it." The men gave a rousing cheer in response to Harry's statement. "I'm going to tell you what you need to know about my plan and then we can go back to the business of getting plastered." The men gave another cheer. "The GOTH or go to hell plan is to fight and fall back through the goblin door and call in an arc light on the wankers, it would be rude not to after they went to all the trouble of bunching up like that." The men laughed. "If they put up a ward that stops the door then I've led you into a trap and my orders are to fight to the last." The men laughed again at that.

"What's the ROE?" McLain called out.

"I'm tempted to order no quarter," Harry replied. "But I'd also like to have a few more prisoners for a bit of tactical intelligence to use in case we fail to cut off the head. Any man that comes into close combat, that is to say any man that comes to within three hundred yards without signaling his intention to surrender has forfeited that right. Enemy wounded are to be cared for if supplies allow, if not that's their problem."

"Three cheers for the Major," one of the men yelled.

"That's your answer," Amelia said to her niece as the men cheered. "They have confidence that Harry knows what he's doing and contempt for their foe. They can't even comprehend the possibility that they might lose."

"I can," Susan said with a shiver. "All I can think of is what if Harry's wrong? What if Neville dies? What if Vo . . . Voldemort takes over? Pretty dumb huh?"

"If you're dumb then so am I," Amelia consoled the girl. "And so is Harry unless I miss my guess. Worrying about what might happen is the job of the commander, so is pretending that there's nothing to worry about. Fear is contagious, especially if the fear is shown by the commander. Harry has to project an image of complete confidence or the men might worry, if the men worry then all could be lost."

"How did . . . that's why you never got scared," Susan said with dawning realisation. "That's why the other Aurors say you've got ice water in your veins."

"And that's why they call me the Ice Bitch," Amelia said with a grin. "I do get scared sometimes, but I never show it."

"Susan," Neville said with a grin as he made his way towards his girlfriend. "There you are, how are you enjoying the party?"

"It's great," Susan said with what confidence she could muster.

"Glad you like it," Neville said jovially. "Got your beer here Amelia."

"Thank you Neville," Amelia replied. "Would you two excuse me for a bit, I'd like to mingle a bit."

"Ok aunt Amelia," Susan said. Shooting the woman a grateful look.

"So . . . uh . . . were you planning to do anything next week?" Neville asked nervously. "If you weren't then I was thinking we could, do something that is."

"I'd love to have a date," Susan agreed. "We could go to a show and have dinner after."

"If you like."

"Could you wear your uniform?" Susan asked hopefully. "I'd like to show you off." She blushed at the last part.

"Show me off?" Neville asked in shock. "I'm something to show off?"

"You're a hero and you made teen witch's most sexy men just after Harry," Susan replied. "Of course you're something to show off."

"I'll be sure to look my best then," Neville agreed.

"Lieutenant Longbottom," a man in a black uniform said with a grin as he walked up to the young couple. "Some of the boys made up a little surprise for you."

"What is it . . . uh?" Neville asked with a grin.

"Sorry sir, Sergeant Murphy Royal Artillery. We talked to the Doc and managed to get your old hand's ashes."

"Go on."

"You know how the Major wants to kick things off with a big time on target before calling in the CAS?"

"Yeah."

"Well it took some doing but each shell in the TOT has a bit of your hand in it," the man said proudly. "They say that a time on target is like the hand of god coming down to smite the bastards on the receiving end. Well, this one will be the hand of Lieutenant Longbottom coming down to smite everything in it's path." Neville's face contorted and he burst into laughter.

"Good work Sergeant," Neville cheered. "And pass on my thanks to everyone."

"I will sir," the artilleryman agreed. "Ma'am." He gave Susan a respectful nod before leaving to rejoin his unit.

|||||||

"They look cute together," Hermione said as she observed Neville and Susan. "Do you think it will work?"

"They seem to like each other," Harry ventured.

"Not that, do you think your plan to deal with Voldemort will work?"

"I hope so, it all depends on him showing up. Might have to call him a coward a couple times to bring him but I see a positive result even if he doesn't show up."

"Because his men get stomped and you mention that he was too much of a coward to face you?" Hermione said with a grin. "I thought propaganda was part of my shop."

"May not be my responsibility but I'm not going to ignore an opportunity if it falls into my lap," Harry replied.

"Do you really think the wards might shut down the door?"

"None of them bothered it when we tested it, but you know what they say."

"It'll break as soon as you need it," Hermione sighed.

"Yup."

"You'll really . . . don't die Harry."

"Don't intend to," Harry said easily.

"Why don't we find some place quiet to have our meal?" Hermione suggested. "Just . . . I just want to have a bit of alone time with you."

"Sergeant Major," Harry called out.

"Sir?"

"Your lovely granddaughter and myself are going to have a picnic in that stand of trees," Harry said. "Disturb us at your peril."

"Have fun sir," Smythe said with a grin. The two friends gathered up their meals and disappeared.

Susan watched all this with a nervous smile. It took only a few minutes to make up her mind and she walked up to the grizzled old man that had seen Harry off.

"Um . . . Sergeant Major?" Susan said uncertainty.

"Something I can do for you lass?" Smythe asked with a smile.

"Neville and I are going to go find some place more private too," Susan's voice firmed. "See that we aren't disturbed . . . please."

"I'll take care of everything," he agreed kindly. "And I may have noticed a nice spot north of here that you might want to take a peak at."

"Thank you," she said with a dazzling grin. Skipping back to Neville's side, she took him by the arm and led him confidently away from the party.

"Just us old folks now," McLain said with a grin.

"I'm not that old," Amelia said as she walked up to the group of NCOs.

"Just us old folks and a pretty young lady then," Smythe ammended.
"Brings back memories though doesn't it McLain?"

"A few," the other man admitted. "Care for another drink Amelia?"

"I'd be delighted," she replied. "Thank you."

IIIIIIII

"You really think he can deliver?"

"I do sir," the man in the grey suit agreed. "And all of our projections agree that his plan has a decent chance of working."

"It's that bad then? Their society really is a breeding ground for terrorists."

"As things are yes."

"Are you planning to be there when he has his battle?"

"Planning to be close sir," the man in the grey suit said quickly. "I'll be in the rear with the gear as they say."

"Then here is what I want you to do. You will first insure that the chief terrorist has been eliminated and that his organization has been rendered harmless. Provided Major Potter accomplishes that task, you are to give him my blessing. The words you are to use is that I order him to cleanse the wizard government of corruption and any remaining collaborators. He is then to act as a temporary military governor until such time as a new government can be set up."

"Yes sir, thank you sir. As to the other matter we discussed."

"It's almost a shame to do that to him after all the good work he's done for us."

"Yes sir, in fact I have several places I'd like to use a man like him."

"That girl of his also I'm told."

"Yes sir, they make a very useful team."

"I sense a but here."

"But a few years of polish could make them even better," the man in the grey suit said with a sigh. "And as things are, there is nothing critical. If something comes up then we can reassess our position."

"Very good, you have my instructions."

"Yes sir, I'll make them happen."

"Excellent, you are free to go then."

"Thank you for your time sir," the man in the grey suit said as he prepared to leave the room.

"One more thing."

"Yes sir?"

"Tell Major Potter that I wished him good luck."

"I will sir, thank you sir."

IIIIIIII

"Come on son," Arthur said. "We're going downstairs."

"Why?"

"The family is going to spend some time with your mother before we leave, Dumbledore wants everyone to be in position early."

"Everything will be fine dad," Ron said. "I trust Harry."

"Tell that to your mother," Arthur ordered. "Do your best to emphasize that your job is to guard Hermione and to keep her away from anything dangerous."

"Right," Ron agreed.

"Even the twins have agreed to behave . . . well, behave for them."

"Everything will be fine," Ron repeated himself. "Harry knows what he's doing."

"I hope so," Arthur sighed. "I thought Dumbledore knew what he was doing but . . ."

"It all got confusing after Harry broke away," Ron agreed. "I just wish things could go back to being the way they were before."

"I do to son. Now let's go, put a smile on your face and go downstairs."

Ron took a deep breath and went down to meet his mother.

"Did you wash your hands Ron?" Molly asked with false calm.

"Yeah mum," Ron agreed.

"Good, have a seat. Do . . . do you want mashed potatoes?"

"I'd love some mum."

"Bill, could you."

"I'll get 'em for you mum," Bill agreed.

They ate the meal in silence, the family's weak attempts at conversation did little to draw Molly out of her melancholy and the woman looked to be close to tears the entire night.

"Everything will be fine mum," Ron tried to reassure her. "I'll be with Hermione and the others won't even be close to the fight."

"What about Harry?" Molly demanded.

"Harry has a few hundred men with him," Ron said quickly. "You know what they did in Diagon Alley, everything will be fine."

"He's right Molly," Arthur said softly.

"Oh Arthur," Molly dissolved into tears. "Don't let any of my boys get hurt, I lost my brothers and I just can't loose my sons."

"They'll be fine," Arthur persisted. "I'll make sure nothing can happen to them."

AN: Took me a little while to finish this chapter.

Napalm Sticks to Dementors

"Drop your cocks and pick up your socks," Smythe called out. "We got ourselves a big day today, wake up you bastards."

"How can you be so cheerful after drinking so much Sergeant Major?" One of the men groaned.

"I'm a superior specimen of the male species," Smythe replied. "For the rest of you apes, the Major was good enough to lay in a supply of Hangover Potions. I suggested that fighting with Hangovers would be good for your souls, but you know what a soft heart the Major has."

The men pushed themselves off the ground and crawled over to the promised potion. "Here's the major's intent, McLain."

"Yes Sergeant Major."

"You're in charge of the Sharp Shooters, take Lt. Longbottom and choose a few men."

"Skirmishers?"

"Giants," Smythe corrected. "I managed to find a dozen Boys Rifles . . ."

"Mind if I take a couple of them ya Pommy Bastard?" The ANZAC Company Sergeant Major asked with a grin. "Be good for the lad's souls to get some trigger time on Charlie the Bastard."

"Be happy to help you in such a weighty spiritual matter ya bloody Kiwi," Smythe replied politely.

"Thanks Nig."

"No problem Marty."

"You want us to form a combined unite Sergeant Major?" McLain asked.

"Be good for the LT's resume," Smythe said thoughtfully. "Commanded a multinational team of blah blah blah."

"Got it Sergeant Major."

"Moment of your time Major Potter?"

"What can I do for you Captain Hart?"

"This is Lt. Murphy, one of my platoon leaders. He's got a bit of an odd request for you."

"What is it Lieutenant Murphy?"

"You know what the Haka is Major?"

"Afraid I've never heard of that term," Harry said regretfully. "What is it?"

"It's a kind of dance the boys would like to do before the battle starts," the Kiwi Lieutenant explained. "We were sort of hoping that you'd give your permission for us to perform it sir."

"Do it," Harry agreed. "But not until Voldemort decides to show up. I wouldn't want him to miss the show."

"Yes sir," the man agreed. "Thank you sir."

"One more thing Lieutenant Murphy," Harry said sharply.

"Yes sir?"

"Tell your men I'm good for three rounds if I find that the death wankers shat themselves because of your Haka."

"I'll tell them sir," he agreed with a grin. "Be ready to pay up."

"It will be a pleasure Lieutenant."

"Order's here sir," McLain announced.

"Harry my boy," Dumbledore said happily. "So good to see you again."

"Dumbledore," Harry acknowledged the man. "Good of you to make it."

"Wouldn't miss it for the world," Dumbledore replied. "Are you still set on doing this alone? Because the Order and I would be more than happy to . . ."

"Forget it," Harry interrupted. "The Order is needed to guard the noncombatants, I am not willing to leave wives, children, and medical personnel unprotected. If you are, then . . . well, you're not someone I want to have contact with."

"You're right of course," Dumbledore agreed. "Forgive me but I hadn't thought about it in those terms."

"Nothing to forgive." Harry's smile was back. "We all make mistakes. Madame Bones, Susan, and Hermione are going to accompany you. With any luck, we'll all be enjoying a cold one together in a few hours."

"Tell your men that I'm good for the first round," Dumbledore said grandly.

"And I'm good for the next," Amelia said as she walked up.

"I'll do that," Harry agreed. "Now if you will excuse me, I have to make sure everything is ready before we go."

"Make sure she doesn't leave," Harry said firmly. "Keep her in sight at all times unless she's in the bathroom and then I want you to send someone along with her."

"Right," Ron agreed.

"You're going to pay for this you know," Hermione said calmly.

"If I live." Harry shrugged. "The man in the grey suit will be there with you Hermione, why don't we say I'm leaving you behind to leave with him?"

"Why don't you pray to god I'm too worried to think up something really bad," Hermione retorted. "Be careful Harry," she added softly. She leaned in and gave him a chaste kiss, "please be careful."

"I will be," Harry agreed firmly. "See you both in a few."

"Later mate."

"Goodbye Harry."

"Let's get this show on the road," Harry said firmly. "Tell the WWW where we'll be in a five minutes and release one of the prisoners with a map and portkey coordinates."

"Yes sir," Smythe agreed. They took their positions and waited. "Sure they'll show?"

"Best of many options," Harry agreed. "If he was smart, he'd try hitting Diagon when it's 'soft' and wiping the place out. St. Mungos would be another good target."

"Which is why you posted the guards sir," Smythe reassured the young officer. "And that would make him look even worse."

"True," Harry agreed. "Unless he succeeded."

"Skirmishers report that they've started to arrive," McLain reported. "Small mixed group of Giants and wizards."

"Look like the party's starting."

"He's not here yet," Harry commented.

"How can you tell sir?"

"I usually get a headache when the bugger gets too close," Harry replied.

"Useful that."

"It can be," he agreed. "For now, I want the men to be sporadic and ineffective Sergeant Major," Harry commanded as he watched the death eater line approach the trench. "Tom went to the trouble of gathering all of his forces for this little battle, I'd like to do him the favor of waiting till they're deep inside our anti-transport wards before we get the party into full swing."

"Oh, and Sergeant Major, Check that the arty is ready." He added after a brief moment of thought. "Nothing more embarrassing then calling for fire and not getting it."

Five miles from the scene, thirty two of the eight inch guns that made up the four batteries of the King's Own stood ready for what they thought was a night practice shoot.

"Right you are sir," Smythe replied with a grin. "Be a shame to let them see the trap till it's too late."

"Have McLain start taking down the giants," Harry said after a moment of thought. "I'd rather not have to deal with them if we go hand to hand."

"You heard him McLain," Smythe said loudly. "Have fun."

McLain replied by pulling the trigger, five minutes later there wasn't a Giant alive within five hundred meters of the wire.

McLain had spent some time finding out just how tall most giants were. The results showed in the field that was now packed with Voldemort's version of tanks... Giants. But for every weapon, there is a defense. Blocks of C4 with bags of roofing nails had been tied to 20 foot posts and set at about 20 feet apart. The nails and steel buckshot went through the giants like grapeshot through spit. Those giants that survived, didn't last long. A .55 calibre bullet designed to punch through tanks, went through giant's skulls without even slowing.

A few bullets went on to punch through a couple of Death Eaters - sort of a two for one bonus kind of thing.

"Looks like they're breaking off the attack sir," Smythe said with a frown. "Any idea why?"

"It's because the chief bugger just arrived," Harry groaned. "Tell the Kiwis that it's a go."

"Right sir," Smythe agreed. "Get to it lads."

The Death Eaters watched in confusion as a group of men left the protection of the trench and formed a line facing them. The Lieutenant stepped out in front of his men and began calling out a chant, the men crouched and joined him while gesturing wildly.

Several of the Death Eaters shifted nervously at the sight, THAT was what they were supposed to fight?

"Bloody savages," one of the men sneered with false confidence. "Think their little dance scares us?" A ragged cheer accompanied his pronouncement and they all turned back to their leader for some sign of how they were supposed to react.

As he watched, Voldemort felt a chill go up his back. For the first time in his life, he wondered if it might not be a good idea to surrender . . . or to retreat. Ruthlessly stomping down any uncertainty, he took a deep breath and prepared to order the men to attack.

Voldemort took a deep breath and looked over his men. "Attack," he hissed.

"Looks like they didn't enjoy the show half as much as I did," Smythe laughed at the Death Eaters.

"Have tell the men that they may blow the mines and fire at will after the artillery strikes."

"They know sir."

"Right," Harry agreed. "Well . . . let's see this hand of god then."

Smythe caught the eye of the artillery spotter and gave a slow deliberate nod. "You want the me to have the medic give you something for that sir?"

The Death Eaters as they reckoned that the explosions that took out the Giants were Harry's last gasp or that someone had gotten anxious and used their most effective charms on the subhuman monsters that their Lord had recruited to bolster the ranks. Here they smirked - as a boy would, continued to advance, kicking aside bits of giant skull that littered the field around the massive bodies.

A few paused in confusion as a sound, reminiscent of the Hogwarts express began come closer, the Death Eaters paused. Was this a new spell. The sound got closer and closer. The looks of confusion turned to shock and fear as the artillery shells began bursting above their heads, raining deadly shrapnel through their closely packed formations.

The earth erupted and screamed it's pain! Small and large plumes of dust, dirt and smoke raced heavenward. Unseen but heard were the bits of jagged metal and stones that whispered around and through the Death Eaters.

Clouds - dirty, ragged clouds appeared as the sky seemed to roar back at the earth. The real man killer had arrived. Air bursts exploded over the death eaters. Shrapnel rained down and reaped it's deadly harvest of the Death Eaters.

The Werewolves while able to heal quickly couldn't cope with the demands that the jagged metal imposed.

Mixed in with the HE were White Phosphorous rounds. And while the smoke made the surviving Death Eaters choke, the glowing flakes burnt into their masks and robes and then into their skins. Vampires who were the true targets of the WP rounds burnt. While stakes, holy water and beheading will kill Vampires, burning will do as well. The stench of burning flesh began to drift across the field.

The last thing that went through Voldemort's mind as he watched in horror as his army shattered under the murderous barrage, was a chunk of metal with a bit of the ash from Neville's hand still clinging to it.

Amidst all the smaller explosions, a greater one grew. Harry looked at McLain with a questioning look?

"Er...Some of the Arty boys got Big Bertha out of the British Gunnery Museum and wanted to see if some of the old shells would still work."

A group of Death Eaters who were on the right flank of their mob had somehow managed to survive. They began to sidle off more to the right hoping that they would be unnoticed. Their hope was for naught. The spotter seeing someone getting away, took great delight in radioing back a new target. The chart operators did their thing with maps and slide rules and barked new figures.

Battery A guns shifted their muzzles slightly and the gun bunnies began their choreographed dance that fed the guns four rounds a minute. A rate that preserved the life of the tubes but killed Armies. Not for nothing were Artillery called the Voice of Kings.

The rain of explosions slowed and then came the silence! Screams that were unheard during the TOT were now able to be heard. Snipers began to search out the survivors and the screams began to diminish as those screaming no longer needed aid . . . of any type.

The world seemed to shift when the artillery struck and an unnatural silence came over the field of battle. The Death Eaters who had not entered the kill zone paused, frozen as their minds tried to process what had just happened.

"Why aren't you firing?" McLain screamed. "Clear that field."

"No need for the medic," Harry said with a grin. "My headache just disappeared."

"Yes sir," Smythe agreed.

"Hmmm, Dementors don't seem to be bothered much by anything but the Willie Pete do they?"

"No sir," Smythe agreed. "You want me to give Major Rickenbacker a call?"

"Yeah," Harry agreed. "Let's see if Napalm works."

"You heard him," Smythe said to the Forward Observer.

The FO nodded and began whispering into his radio, a few seconds later to the shriek of jet engines using full military power deafened the defenders. Harry watched with an impassive smile as the two planes banked and headed towards their target.

Two egg shaped objects came out from under the wings of each plane and tumbled towards the group of disoriented dementors.

Harry watched in fascination as a wave of fire enveloped the the sole remaining cohesive enemy unit. "Tell Major Eddie that I'd like to request a demonstration of what his planes can do," Harry said calmly. "At the time and place of his choosing, providing of course that it's now and in the field in front of us."

"I'll pass it along sir," Smythe agreed with a grin. "Bayonets after that?"

"No party is complete without them."

"Right you are sir."

Following the first two planes came a flight of tank killers flying nape of the earth. Trails of smoke ran down their bellies as the flight poured murderous fire into the field in front of the cheering Tommies.

"I'd guess Puff will be next," Smythe said with a yawn. "Always good for moral."

As if in reply to his words, the ponderous plane came into view dropping it's two hundred candle power flares behind it.

"Giving us a show," McLain commented. "No other reason to do that during the day."

"Nice of them," Smythe agreed.

Harry could almost hear the whirr of the electric motors as the began to rotate the barrels of the three General Electric Gatling guns that armed the magnificent device.

"Any time now."

The tracers made it appear as if a line of fire joined the aircraft to the battle field as the guns opened up. The six thousand round per minute rate of fire immolated what little remained of the surviving enemies forces, placing a bullet in every square inch.

Harry drew his sword and put a whistle to his lips as the plane made it's last pass. Drawing a deep breath, he blew a shrill note that cut through the noise of the battle. "Over the top," he yelled. "Follow me."

The men cheered as they assaulted through the field of battle, smashing and bayoneting everything in their path. Harry's chest was heaving when they reached the end of the destruction.

"Skirmishers out," Harry commanded. "I want those bodies checked now."

"I'm on it sir," Smythe agreed as he began shouting his own orders.

Harry's blood was singing as he watched his men jump to follow his orders. Surely, surely there was no better feeling, then felt when commanding men in battle.

"Major," Lieutenant Murphy called out with a smile. "I've got a present for you."

"What is it?" Harry asked with a wide smile. He was still high on the adrenalin and it was all he could do to stand still.

"We found the chief wanker," Lieutenant Murphy said with a grin. "And it appears that he shat himself, looks like you have a bet to pay off sir."

"Bowels released after he died," McLain said. "Not sure it had anything to do with that dance of yours."

"That's not the way we're going to remember it Sergeant," Harry disagreed. "Nor is it how we're going report it. Sergeant Major Smythe."

"Yes sir."

"Inform the men that I owe them a few rounds of drinks," Harry said seriously. "Compliments of Lieutenant Murphy."

"I'll do that sir," Smythe agreed.

"We also found a couple of survivors," Murphy added.

"How?"

"Shrapnel's weird like that sir," Smythe explained with a shrug. "You could be standing three feet away from the burst and not get a scratch, while another man could be on the other side of the field and take one in the face."

"S'how fate works," McLain agreed.

"Fate may have saved them from the air and the arty," Harry said. "But it's not going to save them from a rope. Have the medics treat them, I wouldn't want them to die before I have a chance to kill them."

"I'll see to it sir."

AN: Thanks go to robhetca, Dave Gerecke for help with this chapter. Voldemort made the biggest mistake an insurgent can, can anyone tell me what that is? The mistake he made was to get into a conventional battle, that is a mistake that tends to be catastrophic. Case in point, the Tet offensive which allowed the US military to

slaughter the Viet Cong en masse. Another example (much as it pains me to use it) is any number of battles during the American Revolution, at least during the early part of the war. Rag tag bands don't tend to do well against professional armies. Voldemort scraped together his followers and came across an open field against fixed fortifications, that was also a major mistake. Especially when his opponent had plenty of time to dial in artillery. Course, if he didn't show up then Harry would have won a propaganda victory. Volde was too much of a coward to show up. Wouldn't have been as good as what happened but, you take what you can get. Even then, a few major attacks on soft targets might have negated any of that.

Omake by hattenjc

"Sergeant First grade Field healer Dobby Reporting as order." a voice said as it marched in.

Hermione blinked seeing a normal man walking through the door. A normal Human with the name of a house-elf. That was fun..

Harry Potter "Good i hear a lot of good about you. Its a honor to have you among us Sergeant." Suddenly The 'human' shrank down to his real house-elf size.

"Dobby is so happy. Dobby believed nobody wanted him so he joined the military. But Potter the greatest wizard of them all really wanted Dobby.."

Hermione sighed. Right...

Another Omake by hattenjc

"Lieutenant Dobby The Deathwing reporting as order" The young pilot said.

Harry "I heard you the best combat Pilot they had for years. Its good to have you among ou" he blinked in shock as the pilot turned in to a crying and happy Dobby the house elf.

Omake by hattenjc

But what happen to the girls.

Hermione. "So Male Squibs was send of to military duty." she said and frowned. "But where where the Female send of to" she said.

meanwhile..

"And this is where we go before a fight Mayor Potter.. They are all 100 squib girls" the old man said.

Harry frowned. "The countdown Ladies Pub and whore house." Some how he knew Hermione would kill him if he enter that place.

Alternative.. Omake what happen to the girls...

Xander Harris frowned "Where DO slayer and Potential Slayer come from" he said wondering.

Giles sighted "No idea. they just suddenly appare like Magic" he said.

Meanwhile..

Buffy held a stake that was giving of sparks of magic she grinned NOW she could go to Hogwarts.

Omake by hattenjc

Harry blinks as a big airplane suddenly open the bomb hatches and a rain of nuts of every kind starts to rain down.. "What is going on.."

"Sorry Mayor the Ministry of Magic putt a Geas to force the Prime Minister to Nuke us if we where victorious. Lucky for us. HE said Nuts us.."

Harry blinks.. Then grab a hand full of salty nuts and starts to eat while plotting Fudge doom "Do you got some beer"

Züriputsch

"Ah, Major Potter." The man in the grey suit said with a smile. "I'm told you succeeded?"

"Yes I did," Harry agreed. "You wanted to speak with me about something?"

"You've confirmed his death?"

"I've seen his body," Harry said. "He came back once, not sure if he can do it again."

"Good enough," he waved off Harry's concerns. "I have a message to you from the PM."

"Yes?"

"You are to root out any corrupt officials and Death Eaters that might be infesting the Ministry of magic," the man in the grey suit said firmly. "You are then to assume the temporary position of Military Governor until such time as an interim civilian government can be put into place."

"Thank you," Harry said calmly. "Sergeant Major."

"Yes sir."

"I need to speak with you."

"Coming sir."

"One more thing Major," the man in the grey suit said with a feral grin.

"What is it?"

"Catch." He tossed a small bag at Harry's chest. "Enjoy."

"Mixed nuts?"

"I promised Fudge I'd use 'nuts' on the winner," he explained. "I always keep my word."

"Heh," Harry ripped open the package. "Right."

"What do you need sir?" Smythe asked after the man in the grey suit had left.

"Madame Bones and the Order still tied up?"

"Yes sir," Smythe replied. "You want us to sit on them till we get things done?"

"I want you to sit on them," Harry corrected. "Under the command of Lieutenant Longbottom."

"Sir, I . . . ah."

"It's you or McLain," Harry said with a smile. "And I want McLain with me when I do this."

"And you want Longbottom to keep his hands clean," Smythe sighed. "Sure I can't talk you out of this?"

"Sure you trust someone else to babysit your lovely granddaughter and that green Lieutenant of mine?"

"He's not that bad sir."

"He's an excellent combat commander," Harry agreed. "Credit to his unit."

"But still green," Smythe agreed. "I'll do it sir, but I don't like it."

"If it makes you feel better Sergeant Major, neither do I."

"Good luck Sir."

"Carry out your orders Sergeant Major," Harry replied. "See you soon."

"Sure you don't want me to do this for you sir?"

"No," Harry said sharply. "I need to keep the regiment clean."

"Get up you lot," Smythe turned away from his young commander and began yelling at the troops. "Column of Twos. Put the Prisoners in the center." Smythe took his place at the side of the formation and gave one last sad glance back to his Commander before marching the men through the goblin doorway.

"McLain."

"Yes sir?"

"Ready to change the world?"

"Ready to change our little part of it sir," McLain agreed with a grin. "Truth be told, I've been wanting to do this for a long time."

Hermione was standing nervously in front of the doorway when the men began to arrive, nervously waiting for Harry's return.

"Neville," Susan screamed joyfully as she threw herself into her boyfriend's arms. "I was so worried."

"Don't be," Neville said with a smile. "It's over, it's all over."

"You mean?"

"Harry did it," Neville confirmed. "He really did it." She replied by squealing and giving him a soul searing kiss.

"Would it be possible to inspect the body?" Dumbledore asked hopefully.

"Not now," Amelia growled at the Headmaster. "Can't you see that they're busy."

"Of course." Dumbledore had the good grace to blush. "Forgive me."

"I don't think they heard you," Amelia said with a smile towards the young couple.

Hermione's anxiety grew as the last men came through the gate. Hands shaking, she marched over to her great grandfather.

"Hello my lovely granddaughter."

"Where's Harry?" Hermione demanded nervously. "Where's Harry damn it?"

"Calm yourself lass," Sergeant Major Smythe said with a smile. "He's fine."

"Then where is he?" Hermione persisted, the girl was close to tears.

"He's got one more thing to do," Smythe said calmly. "My orders are to sit on the Order and Madame Bones."

"Why didn't he bring me with him if he's going to do . . . that?" Hermione started to calm. "I helped him with the plan, doesn't he trust me?"

"Wanted to keep your hands clean," Smythe explained. "I'm afraid that this last bit has the potential to get very dirty."

"That's why Neville is here isn't it?" Hermione sighed. "Harry you dummy."

"We need to leave one dashing young hero to be fawned over," Smythe said with a smile.

"And Harry hates to be the center of attention," Hermione said, not noticing the flat look on her great grandfather's face. "What now?"

"Now we wait," Smythe replied. "The last bit shouldn't be too difficult, trust that the Major knows what he's doing."

"Think we should join the group?" Hermione indicated the crowd that had gathered around Neville.

"Nah, let them have their moment."

Ron hovered in the background watching his charge. He'd felt as if someone had reached into his chest and squeezed his heart when his best friend had failed to show. He'd felt a profound sense of relief when the old man had assured his friend that Harry was still alive, but still . . . a sense of unease had lingered. Why hadn't Harry returned with his men? What was so important that required his personal attention so soon after winning the war? What did they mean about keeping Neville's hands . . . Ron froze. For the first time he realised the deadly potential posed by the crescent of soldiers covering Dumbledore and the rest of the Order.

"Thought I was the chess master," Ron muttered to himself. "Well done Harry."

"You say something lad?" Smythe asked with an odd look on his face.

"I . . ." Ron took one last glance at Dumbledore. "I was just thinking about chess," Ron replied. "I think Harry might be able to give me a decent game next time we play."

"Gonna tell anyone?"

"Nah," Ron said with a smile. "Harry's my friend, it'd be rude to ruin the surprise."

"Good boy," Smythe whispered.

IIIIIIII

"Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen," McLain said with a smile as he walked into the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. "If I could please have your attention."

"What is it?" Kingsley Shacklebolt growled. "And why are you in this office?"

"We're here to check you all for the Dark Mark," McLain replied. "Security measure, we've already rounded up the other Departments."

"And what if we say no?"

"You loose your job," McLain replied with a shrug. "And I'd guess that your former colleagues might have some questions for you."

"What do you want us to do?" Another Auror asked.

"Just give your wands and any magical items over to my friends over here," McLain replied. "You may recognise them all as former members of this Department."

"I assume that they've already been checked?"

"They have," McLain agreed.

"Bout time," Kingsley said with a smile. "Don't get me wrong, I know there isn't a man here that I can't trust."

"But it would look bad if we gave you special treatment," McLain finished with a feral grin.

"Let's form a line people," Kingsley ordered. "Sooner we get this started the sooner we get this over with."

McLain confirmed that everything was going well and prepared to things over to the Senior magical auxiliary. "Jones," McLain said sharply. "Where's the Major?"

"Waiting for you at the door of the Minister's office," Jones replied.

"Smart enough not to do this alone anyway," McLain said with a satisfied smile.

"Hawk."

"What is it McLain?" The old ex-Auror asked.

"You got things here? I've gotta go babysit the Major."

"I got it, have fun."

"Loads of it." McLain walked up the hall and rejoined his Commander.

"Ready?"

"Ready."

"Ok," Harry took a deep breath. "Let's go."

"Sure you don't want me on point sir?"

"No," Harry said honestly. "But I don't want him dead. With any luck, he won't try anything stupid. If he does, I want him focused on me."

"Sir?"

"Much as it pains me to admit it," Harry began with a smile. "You've got better reflexes."

"Understood sir." McLain frowned unhappily.

"Minister Fudge," Harry said as he walked through the door. "You're under arrest for treason."

"You can't do this to me," Fudge screamed. "Guards."

"They won't be giving you any help," Harry said with a smile. "Get up."

"Go to hell," Fudge shouted as he pulled out his wand and threw a spell in Harry's General direction.

Harry felt a sharp pain in his face and heard the sound of a pistol being fired. "Sorry sir," McLain whispered. "Guess my reflexes aren't as good as they used to be."

"Don't worry about it," Harry gasped. "Still better than mine are."

"I want Harper, Bones, and Dumbledore in that order."

"I'll see to it sir."

|||||||

"Dr. Harper."

"What is it corporal?" The regimental surgeon asked.

"Major Potter needs you now," the man replied firmly.

"Ms. Granger," the Doctor called out.

"Yes?" Hermione asked with a calm she didn't feel. She'd noticed the looks the men had shot her as they came.

"Come with me," Dr. Harper said. "Let's go." She took the girl by the hand and followed the men back to the Ministry.

"Harry," Hermione said in alarm when she saw the condition of his face. "Oh god."

"It's ok Hermione," he said calmly. "Here, sit next to me." Hermione sobbed into his shoulder and wrapped her arms around him. "Doctor, if you wouldn't mind?"

"Of course Major," she agreed.

Harry did his best to calm his friend as the Doctor went to work on his ruined face. "How is it Doctor?"

"I'm afraid I had to remove your left eye Major," Dr. Harper said sadly. "The damage was too great."

"That's fine," Harry said calmly. "I still have one left . . . one I lost was the bad one anyway. Thank you for your time Doctor, when can I return to my duties?"

"Six months."

"Give me something more realistic," Harry demanded.

"Harry be quiet," Hermione sobbed. "How can you be so calm about this?"

"I'll panic later," he offered. "When I have time."

"Stupid."

"Well Doctor?"

"So long as you don't exert yourself, then I don't see why you can't get this business done with."

"Tell Daphne to get ready," Harry requested. "Could you ask McLain to have Madame Bones meet me in Fudge's office?"

"I will Major," Harper agreed.

"Hermione."

"What is it Harry?"

"Could you go get Professor Dumbledore?" Harry asked. "I need to meet with him."

"Why can't you send someone else? I don't want to leave you."

"I'd rather you not see what I did," Harry said bluntly. "I'm sorry."

"It's ok Harry," she said. "I'll go."

|||||||

"Hello Amelia."

"Ambrose," Amelia said in delight. "You joined Harry's band of misfits I see?"

"Not too old to do this sort of work," the man agreed. "Major Potter wanted a meeting with you if possible."

"Of course," Amelia agreed.

"One thing . . ."

"What's wrong Ambrose?"

"I'm going to have to ask you to give up your wand," Ambrose said firmly. "Don't try anything Amelia."

"What's this about?" Madame Bones demanded.

"Everything will be revealed in time."

"Here you are." She flung her wand at her old friend. "Let's get this over with." She kept her lips pursed as the man led her into the Ministry and into her boss's . . . former boss's office.

"Thank you for agreeing to meet with me Madame Bones," Harry said with a smile.

"What do you want?" Bones demanded, her eyes fixed on the body of the former Minister of Magic. "Gonna kill me too?"

"Not if I can help it," Harry said calmly. "Would you like to keep your job?"

"So you can use me to crush any resistance to your rule?"

"So the government runs smoothly when I step down," Harry corrected.

"Step down?" Bones asked in shock, "then why did you." She gestured towards Fudge's body.

"He wouldn't go quietly so . . ." Harry raised his hands. "I'm here on the orders of the Prime Minister to find and remove any corruption and root out any death eaters from the wizarding government."

"But . . . but he's a muggle," Amelia gasped.

"Yes he is," Harry agreed.

"So what happens now?"

"You will be interrogated under truth potion to confirm your innocence, if you have not committed any crimes you will be allowed to return to your office or resign." Harry explained. "Any questions?"

"How soon before you step down?"

"I hope to have an interim civilian leader in this office within the week," Harry replied. "After that the Prime Minister has expressed his desire for the Wizarding world to hold an election to confirm or refuse his appointed candidate."

"I see . . . one more thing Major."

"Yes?"

"Did Neville know anything about this?"

"I don't believe so," Harry said after a moment of thought. "I did my best to keep him out of the dirty side of this."

"Thank you Major Potter," she said with a small smile. "Come on Ambrose, I have work to do and I can't waste anymore time then necessary."

Harry took a deep breath as he prepared for his next meeting. "Hello Professor."

"Harry."

"Could you wait outside Hermione?"

"Ok Harry," she agreed reluctantly.

"So it's come to this has it?" Dumbledore asked sadly. "You let power corrupt you as so many have before you."

"I've cleaned up your mess like I have so many times before," Harry corrected. "As it was, as you let it become. Our world was a breeding ground for Dark Lords."

"So it's ok to set yourself up as Dictator?" Dumbledore demanded. "To save us from what might happen?"

"Have you ever heard of George Washington?"

"What?"

"George Washington," Harry repeated. "The Commanding general during the revolt of the colonies?"

"What about him?"

"After the war ended, a group of his officers grew tired of the treatment they were receiving at the hands of the new government so they proposed to march on congress to make their complaints in person." Harry explained. "Several of them suggested making George Washington, the man who had led them in times of war. The leader of their new nation."

"I fail to see where this is going."

"He refused," Harry said. "He gave a speech begging them to stand down. He did his best to safeguard the civilian leadership."

"And they listened?"

"They did not."

"Then why . . ."

"He pulled out a letter and could not read it and apologized to his men," Harry continued. "He said that he'd grown grey and blind during the fight for independence."

"And that's when they listened," Dumbledore sighed.

"Yes, that's when they listened." Harry agreed. "Later after Washington had been elected and served as president, he did the greatest thing he'd ever done in his life. Do you know what that is Professor?"

"I must admit I'm at a loss," Dumbledore replied. "Enlighten me Harry."

"The greatest thing he ever did wasn't leading his armies in battle and it wasn't getting power. It was giving it up."

"You don't intend to keep power then?"

"No I don't," Harry agreed. "I hope to be gone within the week after the Ministry is ready to be handed over to the Prime Minister's appointed interim Minister of Magic."

"What then?"

"Then an election will be held at some later date," Harry said.

"I see . . . why did you wish to meet with me Harry? Was it to assure me that you intended to step down?"

"No," Harry said. "It was to ask for your support."

"Why would I give it?"

"Two reasons."

"Well?"

"You don't want anymore bloodshed then I do."

"And my cooperation would help prevent it," Dumbledore agreed. "What's the second?"

"Severus Snape," Harry said coldly. "Is a Death Eater and the fact that he may have been your spy does nothing to excuse the crimes he committed."

"You're willing to let him go then?"

"I'm willing to leave him for the civilian government that follows me," Harry corrected. "What they may or may not do is none of my concern."

"Agreed," Dumbledore said looking as old as Harry had ever seen him. "What happened to you Harry?"

"Life."

"I see, can you tell me anything about the temporary Minister?"

"Daphne Blake, until recently she was the Minister's representative to the muggle government."

"Yes I remember Ms. Blake," Dumbledore mused. "Any hints on what her policies are?"

"I believe that she intends to grant werewolves goblins, and other . . . creatures the right to vote."

"Stuffing the ballot box?"

"No, they'll only get it if she's confirmed as Minister."

"Ah . . . Harry, as noble as her ideals are. It is unlikely that she will receive much support," Dumbledore said with a hint of his old grandfatherly smile. "The purebloods would never stand for it, not even light families such as the Weasleys."

"Her reelection is none of my concern," Harry said with a boyish smile. Let the old man figure it out himself. "This mess is out of my hands after the hand over."

AN: I think that the history is a bit off here but it's close, I went from memory and so did Harry. This came out a bit sooner than I expected but when the urge to write hits, the urge to write hits. I don't think the events in this chapter came as a surprise to anyone did they?

Epilogue

"Can I have a moment of your time sir?"

"Come in Neville," Harry agreed. "What can I do for you?"

"I hate to ask," Neville said with a blush. "But the war's over and well . . . Hogwarts is going to start . . ."

"You want to be released from active service so that you can finish school?"

"Hoping to be," Neville agreed. "If you need me I'll stay of course but . . ."

"Calm down Neville," Harry interjected. "It's fine, I was thinking of suggesting it anyway."

"You were?"

"I'd like to set up a corps of cadets at Hogwarts to replace," Harry explained. "Assuming you didn't intend to go to the school on base anyway."

"Susan's going to Hogwarts," Neville said with a blush. "And I don't want to spend too much time away from her."

"See Smythe," Harry ordered. "He'll give you the stuff to set things up."

"Thanks Harry."

"Not a problem Neville," Harry said. "Did Susan come with you?"

"Yeah Harry," Neville agreed. "Why?"

"Could you send her in? I'd like to speak with her for a little while."

"Sure Harry." Neville left and his girlfriend came in a few minutes later.

"You wanted to speak with me Harry?"

"Wanted to tell you something," Harry explained. "Feel free to pass it on to your aunt."

"What did you want to say?"

"If all goes to plan, Neville will be the Minister of Magic some day. I just wanted to ask for your support in making it happen."

"That's why you left him behind when you took over the Ministry?"

"I had to keep his hands clean," Harry agreed. "Your dashing young hero and his regiment had to be above reproach. Everything dodgy had to be on my head."

"Thank you Harry," Susan whispered. The girl had a sad look on his face. "I appreciate that, I really do. I'll . . . Neville will be Minister."

"Don't push him too hard," Harry cautioned. "Just plant the idea in his head, tell him that it was by my request if you have to but if all else fails, forget it. My plans aren't important enough to strain your relationship."

Impulsively, Susan leaned over the desk and kissed Harry on the cheek. "Thank you Harry, for everything."

"Goodbye Susan."

"Take care of yourself Harry," the girl replied. "And good luck."

"Thanks," he said to her back as she left the room. Harry let out a breath. "I guess it was fun while it lasted."

"What was fun?" Hermione came in thorough the open door.

"How do I look?" Harry asked with a melancholy smile.

"You look good," Hermione replied. "Doctor Harper did a good job."

"I ment the uniform."

"Oh . . . it looks good too," Hermione said. "Ready to hand things over to Minister Blake?"

"To do that and . . . and to give up command of the regiment."

"What?" The girl squeaked.

"It had to happen sooner or later," Harry said with a shrug. "Better sooner then later I suppose, no need to drag it out."

"I thought things could stay the way they are now?" Hermione said slowly. "You'd command the regiment and . . . why are you giving up command? Are you planning to go back to school?"

"No I . . ."

"Did I come at a bad time?"

"Come right in Minister Blake," Harry said with a smile. "Glad you could take over so quickly, one more day of this and I'd have been ready to do something unpleasant."

"The fact that we'd been planning and prepairing for this helped a bit," Daphne replied. "Anything I should know about?"

"I'll need you to stay here for ten to fifteen years, just long enough for Neville to get ready for the post."

"Mind if I give Amelia a stint before that?"

"Up to you," Harry said after a few seconds. "I trust her and with the muggle born on our side, we can control the government until blood doesn't matter anymore."

"Thank you Major." Daphne offered her hand. "I'll see about getting a more official thanks for you later."

"I appreciate your thanks more than I would anything more official," Harry replied. "But I appreciate the thought."

"Colonel Churchill is waiting outside and requests a meeting at your leisure."

"Can't keep him waiting then," Harry said with false cheer. "Coming Hermione?"

"Yeah," she agreed. "Who's Colonel Churchill?" She added in a whisper.

"My replacement."

"Oh."

"It was a pleasure working with you Minister Blake."

"The Pleasure was mine Major."

"Hermione?" He offered her his arm.

"Let's go Harry," the depressed girl agreed. They walked out of the Minister's office to find an old man in an officer's uniform waiting for them.

"Major Potter?"

"Colonel Churchill I presume?"

"I am," he confirmed. "How do you want to do the change over Major?"

"As painlessly as possible." Harry reached up and took the crowns off his shoulders. "They're good men," he said tightly.

"I'll take care of them," the old man promised. "Good luck Major."

"Cadet," Harry corrected. "Well . . . soon anyway."

"Cadet then," Jack agreed. "Care for a drink?"

"I . . ." Harry glanced at his friend. "Another time."

"I'll hold you to that Mr. Potter," the old officer agreed. "And I look forward to the time you come to collect."

"What now Harry?" Hermione asked.

"Now I go to Sandhurst," Harry replied. "And I do my best to avoid anything magical for the foreseeable future."

"What about me?" Hermione said quietly.

"I made sure to keep your hands are clean, you can stay if you like."

"But . . . but you saved them," Hermione said. "Why do you have to leave?"

"Dogs and soldiers keep off the grass," Harry said with a shrug. "It's Tommy this and Tommy that . . ."

"And Tommy Ow's your soul," Hermione snapped. "I read it too, but it doesn't explain anything."

"It's best for me to disappear for a few years until memories have had a chance to fade," Harry sighed. "I burned and killed until there wasn't anything to burn and everything was dead. People are going to see that and remember what I did. They'll forget that I did it to save them and they'll forget the fact that they cheered me on. They'll only think that if I did it once then I can do it again."

"Then why do you have to loose your command?" Hermione persisted. "Why can't you just stay with the men?"

"I need to keep the men in the wizarding world," Harry explained. "The Minister's bodyguard can easily become assassins if the need should occur. So long as they remain the trusted protectors of the wizarding world, then they can always take it without much trouble."

"But . . ."

"A lasting peace," Harry said. "The sacrifice of a few years is worth creating a lasting peace."

"Harry . . ."

"I needed to get the training to match my rank anyway," Harry went on. "Jack is a good commander, he'll take care of the men."

"What about us?"

"I'll visit you when I can," Harry said quickly. "If you don't mind meeting in the muggle world."

"Oh Harry."

"Mind if I borrow Ms. Granger for a bit?" The man in the grey suit asked, smiling at the two shocked faces.

"Of . . . of course not," Harry said after a glance at his friend. "I'll be here when you need me."

"I think I saw an empty office down here," the man in the grey suit said as he walked down the hall. "Ah . . . here it is."

"You know, your Harry is very popular. I have a dozen requests on my desk from the Marines, the Navy, the Yanks, Canucks, Kiwis, Aussis, well . . . everyone who had a chance to work with him anyway. As things are, there is a very good chance that he'll spend the next few years in one school or another learning more about his trade all around the world."

"Oh."

"I've also got a request . . . better make it a demand from Sport and Social that he be assigned to them after he's had a chance to finish his little tour. Not sure if I'll allow that one, he's a bit too valuable to let him slip out of my fingers."

"Oh."

"But that's not what I wanted to speak with you about. I was hoping that you'd be willing to spend some time showing the flag yourself. Officially, you'd be a student at Oxford taking part in a program that would take you to a number of countries to study the local way of doing things. Unofficially, well . . . I think you'll find that your program won't take you too far from whatever Mr. Potter happens to be doing."

"I'd get to stay with Harry?" She asked hopefully.

"The two of you make a very good team," he replied. "I would be a fool to break you up."

IIIIIIIIII

Hogwarts, two months later . . .

"Longbottom," Snape growled. "What do you think you're doing?"

"Shut up," Neville said calmly. "And show yourself out, we're busy and we don't want to be bothered by the likes of you."

"How dare you speak to me like that," Snape said loudly, his face red and his hands shaking. "I am a Professor and you will show me the respect that I deserve."

"Let me make one thing clear to you. At the end of the day, all you are is another Death Eater." Neville said calmly, "and I think we both know what I do to Death Eaters. Now get out of my sight . . . Professor." Neville watched in satisfaction as Snape stumbled out of the room. "Ya think he soiled himself?"

His comment drew a few scattered laughs from the crowd in front of him.

"Listen up," Neville addressed the crowd. "Some of you have been asking about the DA, well it is no more. Harry and Hermione aren't going to come back to the school, accept it."

"But how will we learn defence?" One of the students called out. "The tosser Dumbledore's got won't teach us anything useful."

"Like I said," Neville repeated himself. "The DA is no more . . . Harry's Bastards on the other hand, is accepting new members."

"Harry's Bastards?" Susan said in surprised. "I thought we were going to call it Training Section Number Two?"

"Fine," Neville sighed. "Training Section Number Two, AKA Harry's Bloody Bastards."

"Now it's Bloody Bastards?" Susan asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Damn it," Neville muttered to himself. "Granddad said this would happen."

"That what would happen?" Susan asked sweetly.

"Nothing dear," Neville said in defeat. "Could you pass the sign up sheet around?"

"Of course sweets," Susan agreed.

IIIIIIII

Afghanistan, several years later . . .

"Phillip," the young captain said in delight. "How are you old boy, I haven't seen you in . . ."

"Four years?" Phillip offered. "Close to that anyway. How is your career going James?"

"I'm still in the life guards and I believe that I'm on the short list." James said proudly. "How's yours?"

"Just got my promotion and just got transferred into the 95th Rifles." Phillip replied. "You seen anyone else from the old class?"

"A couple," Phillip replied. "You're the first I've seen in country. You?"

"Remember Potter?"

"Short fellow with the glasses?" Phillip said uncertainly.

"That's the one," James agreed. "I saw him about a month ago."

"How's he doing?" Phillip asked. "In charge of a supply company or some such I'd bet. Did he ever make captain?"

"He's a major," James said with a smile. "And soon to be promoted if rumors are to be believed."

"Promoted . . . but . . . but how?"

"When I saw him, we'd been in the desert for several weeks." James began. "You've heard how Fighting Jack likes his patrols."

"Says too much time in the rear dulls the troops or some such doesn't he?"

"That's him," James agreed. "Well, as I was saying. We were in the middle of bloody nowhere when one of the natives appeared in the Colonel's tent and the cheeky bastard was pouring himself a bottle of the Colonel's finest scotch."

"You shoot the bastard?"

"Fighting Jack turned red and was about to shout something when the native told him to have a seat in perfect queen's English." James said with a laugh. "Jack was so surprised that he let the stranger pour him a glass."

"And?"

"They called in a few of the older NCOs and they had a meeting," James replied. "Not sure what they were talking about but you could hear the laughter carrying all around the camp."

"Then?"

"Then the native walked out past the pickets and gave a shrill whistle," James continued. "And out of no where a band of Muj appeared on horses. Well, the native hopped on one of the horses and said something to the others and they dropped several prisoners on the ground and disappeared."

"What's this have to do with Potter?"

"One of the younger men said something unkind about the native," James said with a laugh. "And the older men hit the roof, said if he ever said another word about Major Potter then it would be his last. Talked with some of the men later and they wouldn't admit much, just said that he was one of the most ruthless officers that they'd ever had the pleasure to serve under."

"Damn . . . guess you can never tell what makes a man without seeing him fight." Phillip said slowly. "But it does bring light to something I saw in Kandahar."

"Do tell."

"Remember that girl that was always hanging around Potter?"

"One he'd spend all his time with?"

"That's the one," Phillip agreed. "I saw someone that looked like her talking with the General and the Ambassador, didn't think it was her at the time but . . ."

AN: Fighting Jack AKA Mad Jack Churchill was a very cool guy, look him up. Lots of people angry that Harry lost an eye, and why you ask? Harry was standing in a doorway with a man behind him, I guess he could have dropped to the floor and let McLain take it but he didn't, why did this happen? Two reasons, and I admit that I am overly fond of that expression. One, Harry had to go in with his weapons holstered and no shield, he had to give Fudge a chance to surrender without a fight. Killing Fudge had to be the last resort and while they were prepared, I don't think Harry really expected Fudge

to put up a fight but everything can be dangerous when you corner it. One more thing, yes I know I said two but I may as well add this last one. In the back of his mind Harry realises the fact that his death would seal the deal, he'd turn from a potential tyrant to a martyr.